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BJ1011 .T39 1901
Taylor, A. E. (Alfred Edward), 1869-1945.
The problem of conduct : a study in the phenomenology of ethics

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THE PROBLEM OF CONDUCT

THE PROBLEM OF CONDUCT

A STUDY IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ETHICS

BY

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PREFACE

THE present work is practically identical with one which obtained the Green Moral Philosophy Prize in the University of Oxford for the year 1899, the topic proposed for discussion to competitors being "the Reciprocal Relations between Ethics and Metaphysics." Except for the occasional removal or addition of a few lines of text or explanatory footnote and the correction of obvious inaccuracies, the Essay appears now in the form in which it was submitted to the judges. In the numerous cases where I am indebted to previous writers I have, except where the allusion was manifest of itself, regularly endeavoured to indicate my obligation in a footnote; should any exception to this rule be discovered I trust the omission will be put down to unintentional oversight.

There is one obligation, however, which seems to me to call for special acknowledgment here. To the writings of my friend, Mr. F. H. Bradley, especially to certain portions of his *Appearance and Reality*, I believe myself to owe, directly or indirectly, almost everything in this Essay that possesses any value. The frequent reference to Mr. Bradley's works in my footnotes are far from being an adequate expression of my debt.

It may seem strange that a work originally written in connection with a prize instituted in commemoration of the late Professor T. H. Green should contain a whole chapter of polemic directed against certain of his doctrines. If any

explanation of the fact is needed, I can only say that, while I feel it an honour for any work of mine to be in any way connected with the name of so distinguished a philosopher and so eminent a man as Green, I am strongly convinced, as I have observed in the text, that it would be a real service to his memory to disentangle his admirable account of moral institutions from the, to my mind, untenable metaphysical assumptions of the earlier chapters of the *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

My friend, Mr. F. H. Dale, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, very kindly read the whole of my proofs. Unfortunately, accident prevented my receiving Mr. Dale's criticisms in time to profit by them in preparing my work for publication. I have also to thank my friend, Mr. P. J. Hartog of the Owens College, for his kindness in reading the proofs of the supplementary note to Chapter V., and suggesting various improvements.

THE OWENS COLLEGE, MANCHESTER,
1*st December* 1900.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY—THE PROBLEM STATED

C'est proprement avoir les yeux fermez sans tascher jamais de les ouvrir, que de vivre sans philosophie.—DESCARTES.

ALL students of Aristotle must be familiar with that philosopher's habit of prefixing to what he calls the "physical" investigation of a difficulty, that is, the detailed examination of the concrete forms in which the puzzle in question is suggested by the facts of ordinary experience or the more systematised results of scientific observation, a preliminary "logical" discussion of the same problem in its most general and abstract shape. It seems on the whole convenient to make this Aristotelian distinction the basis of the arrangement of our present essay, and to devote this chapter and the next to a general preliminary investigation of the same material which we propose to handle in a more concrete and "physical" manner in the rest of our work. As the ground we intend to cover is extensive, and as our progress will sometimes have to be circuitous, it is as well, even at the cost of some repetition, to present the reader at the outset of our inquiry with a kind of sketch-map of the route we shall pursue, and the goal we hope to reach, so that he may from the first be in a position to judge whether or not it is worth his while to make the journey in our company. It is of course a disadvantage inseparable from this method of procedure that our results, as presented in their most general form in our preliminary statement, must appear vague and abstract, and I would therefore warn my reader that the full meaning of the conclusions which will be suggested by these introductory chapters, as well as the full cogency of the evidence upon which they are based, will only be manifest in the course of that more detailed

examination of ethical facts which will form the main body of this essay. With this prefatory word of explanation, I turn at once to the subject which is to be considered in the following pages—the relation between ethics and metaphysics.

It seems clear that in all cases in which we can say that two sciences stand in close connection with one another, the nature of the relation between them must be conceived in one of two ways. Either one of the two sciences is actually derivative from the other and dependent upon it for its principles and methods, or else they are independent and co-ordinate branches of inquiry, and the relation between them is simply one of mutual contact and support at various points. The difference between the two cases is too obvious to need a lengthy explanation, but we may in passing illustrate it by comparing the relation of mechanics to geometry, or of acoustics to kinematics, with the very different relations which, in the view of the most competent authorities in either science, obtain between psychology and physiology. Psychology is not applied physiology as mechanics may be said to be applied geometry. It is an independent science, with a subject-matter and a method which are peculiarly its own, and by which it is distinguished from all other branches of knowledge; but, in virtue of the close connection between the mental events investigated by the psychologist and the cerebral events studied by the physiologist, physiology is constantly throwing light by analogy on the dark places of psychology, while psychology seems already to be reaching the stage of development at which it may reasonably be expected in its turn to exercise an important influence on the investigations of the cerebral physiologist.[1] In any particular case, then, such as that now under consideration, we have to decide between three alternative possibilities. (1) It might conceivably be the case that ethics is, in the fullest sense of the word, a mere derivative and offshoot of metaphysics, based from beginning to end upon the results of the superior science, and consisting, in fact, in nothing more than the systematic application of metaphysical first principles to the special subject-matter furnished by the facts of human conduct. (2) Or again, ethics might prove to be the primary and superior science, and metaphysics might be

[1] Cf. Stout, *Analytic Psychology*, i. 32.

restricted merely or mainly to the task of ascertaining what general conclusions about the nature of the universe can be drawn from the data supplied by ethics. (3) Or last, it may be that neither science is, properly speaking, derived from or dependent upon the other. Each may have, quite independently of the other, its own peculiar subject-matter, and its own special way of dealing with those facts of experience upon which all sciences are in the last resort based. Each may be capable of, or rather may require, separate treatment on its own merits; both may suffer if either is directly subordinated to the other, and yet one or both may contribute to the other either special problems for solution, or principles by which the solution of such problems may be effected. If we decide for this third view of the case, it will, of course, still be necessary to ask in detail what are the particular points at which the spheres of study of the metaphysician and the moral philosopher touch, and which science has the most to learn from the other.

It is not difficult to see that each of the three views just enumerated has had its advocate among the distinguished philosophers of ancient and modern times. The first opinion, indeed, according to which ethics is regarded as a mere series of deductions of truths about morality from the principles of metaphysics, can hardly be said to have been consistently adopted by any school of Greek philosophers except perhaps the Neo-Platonist, but it is clear from the famous description of the functions of dialectic in *Republic*, p. 511 (with which compare also 534 C ff.) that Plato's leanings lay in this direction, though in his actual treatment of moral questions he shows himself for the most part more dependent upon psychology and everyday observation than upon metaphysics. The same tendency to make ethics a mere subordinate branch of metaphysics appears early in the history of modern philosophy in the striking and original but little-known *Ethica* of the Belgian Cartesian, Arnold Geulinx, and has profoundly influenced at least the form of the most famous of all modern treatises on moral philosophy, the *Ethics* of Spinoza. In more recent times we have, of course, on the same side of the question a whole host of illustrious names, from Kant and Hegel and Schopenhauer at the beginning of the present century down to Professor Green and the rest of the distin-

guished English interpreters of German idealism at its close. The second view has perhaps never been held by any thinker of importance in an absolutely unqualified form. No one, so far as I know, has maintained that the whole of metaphysics should be treated as a mere series of deductions from the propositions of ethical science. But an approximation to this standpoint is to be found in the attitude of that numerous class of philosophers who attribute to specially ethical considerations a preponderating, though not an exclusive, significance for metaphysics. Such is, for instance, the view of Lotze, as expressed in the dictum that "the true beginning of Metaphysic lies in Ethics" (*Met.* ii. 319, E. T.). Such again is the position taken up on more than one occasion by Professor James in his *Principles of Psychology*, and more explicitly defended with considerable vigour by his fellow-countryman, Professor Howison, in an essay contributed to a recently published work on "The Conception of God."[1] For the third view, which may perhaps without prejudice be called that of "common-sense," it will be sufficient to adduce the weighty authority of Aristotle—whose criticism of the Platonic "Idea of Good" in *Ethica Nicomachea*, i. 6, so far as it has any serious value, turns upon this very point—in the ancient, and of Herbart in the modern world. It will be the main object of the present essay to show, by a detailed examination of some of the most important facts and concepts of ethics, that this interpretation of the relation between the two sciences is the only one that is not beset with insuperable difficulties. More definitely, we hope to show, as against the metaphysical moralists, that ethics is as independent of metaphysical speculation for its principles and methods as any of the so-called "natural sciences"; that its real basis must be sought not in philosophical theories about the nature of the Absolute or the ultimate constitution of the universe, but in the empirical facts of human life as they are revealed to us in our concrete everyday experience of the world and mankind, and sifted and systematised by the sciences of psychology and sociology; finally, that where ethics touches upon the borders of metaphysics, it does so, no otherwise than physics or any other considerable body of empirically ascertained truths, by

[1] See especially *op. cit.* p. 126 ff.

suggesting for the critical reflection of the metaphysician certain types of problem and certain general ways of looking at the world as a whole. We shall maintain, in fact, that ethics should be regarded as a purely "positive" or "experiential" and not as a "speculative" science. The argument by which we shall support this contention will be of a threefold character. We shall first of all offer some reflections of a general kind upon the points in which a science founded upon metaphysics ought to differ from one that is purely positive and experiential, and shall invite the reader to judge for himself how far these characteristic marks of a metaphysical origin are to be found in the science of morals. Next, we shall try to meet and answer some of the reasoning by which the metaphysical moralists have sought to show that there can be no satisfactory theory of conduct apart from a metaphysical foundation. We shall then go on, in the main body of our essay, to show the impossibility of basing ethics upon a pre-existing system of metaphysics, by a detailed examination of some of the principal facts of which ethics has to take account, as well as by incidental criticisms of the assumptions which have to be made by the defenders of the view against which our argument is directed. In the course of this examination, it will also appear why we cannot subscribe to the view of those who attribute to the leading concepts of ethics a full and final metaphysical truth and validity which they deny to the concepts employed by the physical sciences. Thus, though the problem proposed for our investigation is properly speaking metaphysical rather than ethical, it will require for its solution a fairly comprehensive survey of the whole body of facts which fall within the purview of the science of conduct, and it is upon the completeness and self-consistency of this review of the facts of the moral life that our success in answering the metaphysical question will ultimately depend. It is for this reason that I have called this essay, I hope not too ambitiously, a study in the "Phenomenology of Ethics" rather than in the "Metaphysics" of conduct.

We begin our inquiry, then, with the following very abstract and general question: By what distinguishing marks may a science that has a metaphysical origin be known from one that has not, and what advantages in the way of certainty, univers-

ality, or completeness should the propositions of such a science enjoy over those of its base-born "empirical" kindred? Before we can answer this question we must first explain as clearly as we can the sense in which the terms "Metaphysics" and "Empirical Science" have been and will be used in the pages of this essay. I need hardly say that the statement we are about to make does not claim to be a complete and scientific definition of the term "Metaphysics"; still less can it pretend to be an adequate description of everything that has at one time or another gone under that name. A formal and complete definition of the science would no doubt be necessary in a set treatise upon metaphysics, where the course of the exposition would offer ample opportunities for testing its accuracy and comparing it with rival definitions, but the assumption of such a hard and fast formula in a work like the present, where it would have to be introduced, if at all, without adequate examination and discussion, could not but seem arbitrary and capricious. The following remarks, then, are offered, not as a finally satisfactory and scientific definition, but simply as a general description of the class of inquiry which will be meant when the name "Metaphysics" reappears in these pages. At the same time, though I do not claim that our use of the word agrees precisely with the sense that has been put upon it in any of the great philosophical systems, I believe it will be found to cover in a general way most of the investigations which have been known as metaphysical. First of all, then, let us make it perfectly clear that when we speak of "Metaphysics" as being in some way opposed to the "empirical" or "positive" sciences, we do not for a moment intend to suggest that metaphysics is in the last resort independent of what is commonly called "Experience," or the actual "facts" of everyday life. It may reasonably be doubted whether any great philosopher has ever really held the view, which popular thought, not without some excuse, ascribes to Plato and Hegel, that it is possible to a large extent to determine the nature and contents of the universe in advance of all experience, by an exercise of creative thought, and that the knowledge attained by speculative activity of this kind is superior in certainty and dignity to the information which comes to us through more ordinary channels. At any rate, whatever may

have been the meaning of these great philosophers, we may be allowed at the outset of the present discussion to avow our own disbelief in the existence of any such "high *priori* road" to knowledge. When we speak of "Metaphysics" as a real and valuable branch of science, what we intend by that name is a series of analytical inquiries based, like those of any other science, in the last resort upon the actual experience of facts of ordinary life, and having for their object nothing more mysterious than the complete and consistent description of those facts as a whole in the simplest possible terms. If by "Empirical Science" be meant a science consisting in the complete and consistent description of facts of experience, then metaphysics, as we understand the word, may rightly be said to be itself an "empirical" science. If we prefer to avoid this form of expression and to keep the name "empirical" for certain branches of knowledge which differ as to their handling of the facts of experience from metaphysics in a way which we are about to explain, our reason is not that the word as applied to metaphysics would be in itself a misnomer, but rather that we wish to avoid misleading associations arising from the history of the terms. We hesitate to call metaphysics an "empirical" study for no other reasons than those which ought to make us think twice before applying the same epithet without preliminary explanation to geometry or arithmetic. All knowledge, we admit, is in the last resort "empirical," in the sense that it arises out of *facts*, that is, out of experiences which we cannot altogether fashion as we please to suit our own convenience, or our own sense of what is fitting or desirable, but have largely to accept as they come to us. And further, we have admitted that all knowledge not only begins with such facts or experiences, but has for its object nothing more than the full and coherent description of them in the simplest possible terms. As this is a statement which is, verbally at least, in direct contradiction with what seem to be at present the reigning philosophical views, it is perhaps desirable to explain our meaning a little more fully, in order to guard against certain natural misunderstandings. In what sense, we may be asked, can you assert that knowledge consists simply in the description of facts of experience, when it is notorious that the accounts of the world and its contents which

are put forward by our scientific men as the latest outcome of experimental research are, whatever else they may be, in almost every particular, utterly unlike the facts which the plain man believes himself to be experiencing in his daily life. To draw our illustrations from the most fundamental assumptions of the physical theories which have the widest currency among us, when does experience present us with anything corresponding to the impenetrable and indivisible atom, the imponderable ether, the absolutely empty space of which our scientific text-books tell us? How can an account of the world given in terms of elements which *ex hypothesi* are never perceived as they really are, be called a description of the facts of experience? Or, to make our argument independent of even so generally accepted an hypothesis as that of the atomic constitution of matter, how can the attempt to describe *facts* of experience ever lead us to construct a picture of the world and its processes from which the secondary qualities, colour, sound, smell, taste, which constitute so important an aspect of the facts of life as we experience them, are rigidly banished? A science which reduces all these qualitative differences between the contents of experience to differences in the shape, size, grouping, movements, etc., of solid particles may, one would think, give us the *truth* about things, but can hardly be said to describe the facts, if by fact one means something which is or might be the content of an actual experience.[1] Hence it is not surprising that it should be very generally maintained that it is the first characteristic of all true science to get behind facts and the mere description of them, and to substitute for mere description, explanation of the actually experienced by reference to some more ultimate reality which does not as such enter into the content of any one's experience. An argument of this nature is so plausible and contains so much real truth that it is worth our while, even at the cost of a slight digression, to make the meaning of our own rival contention clearer, and to show how our own statement about the objects of science is consistent with a full recognition of all that is true in this apparently opposing doctrine.

[1] The argument would appear even more plausible if we took into consideration the recent attempts of physicists to get behind the solid atom itself. Cf. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, chaps. ii.-vi. *passim*.

And first, a word in explanation of two important terms which we have hitherto used without definition—"experience" and "fact." Of experience, as of all ultimate psychical realities, it is impossible to give any but a verbal explanation. If any one does not know what experience means, or what it is to "experience" light or heat, pain or pleasure, no words of ours will make the matter more intelligible to him. It is utterly impossible to throw any light upon the nature of experience by reference to any still simpler and more universal concept. But by way of a merely verbal definition, and in order to enable the reader to identify with precision in his own inner life that which we mean by "experience," we may perhaps say that "experience," in the sense in which we are using the word, is the most general term by which we can describe the fundamental character of all that goes on in the inner life of a *subject*[1]—that is, of a centre of consciousness which is so far developed as to be capable in even the most rudimentary fashion of singling out and recognising identical recurring qualities or aspects within the general mass of its otherwise undifferentiated organic consciousness, and of guiding its behaviour towards its environment by the recognition. Experience is thus, on the one hand, a term of narrower extent than consciousness or sensation. For it is perhaps at least conceivable that there may be, in the words of Mr. Bradley (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 28, ed. 1), "creatures whose life consists, for themselves, in one unbroken simple feeling," and within the limits of such a consciousness as theirs there would be no room for that recognition and distinction of identical aspects within a larger whole of organic sensation upon which we have made "experience" depend.[2] Indeed, even without

[1] I do not say a *self*, because, so far as I can see, the recognition of a permanent system of connected contents, such as the presentations of my own body, or my organic sensations, as constituting myself, and the permanent opposition of this system of contents first to all similar systems or selves and then to all other contents whatsoever, is a late and highly complex derivative from the more simple form of distinction described in the text.

[2] Against this distinction between sensation and experience it is only fair to quote the weighty authority of Dr. Ward, who dismisses the doctrine adopted in the text with something like impatience (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*, ii. 122). "There is still another view that it would be wearisome, and as I think needless, to discuss, which should perhaps be mentioned. I refer to a doctrine, now in favour with certain psychologists, that I have ventured to call Presentationism. According to this, there are at starting only presentations, and these by their interaction in due course give rise to a special presentation, or rather complex of presentations, called the subject.

suggesting the existence of such very problematical beings, we might plausibly contend that even in our own life-history there has been a stage at which consciousness existed before the rise of anything that can be called experience. For it seems quite unmeaning to talk of experience, unless there is something present which is experienced: in our own technical language, all experience is the experience of a *subject*, the apprehension of a special content which is distinguished from the rest of the accompanying mass of consciousness, and it is not easy to see how any content gets this distinctness to begin with, except upon the basis of a repetition of identical stimulus amid varying concomitants. Either the content so distinguished is identical with some former content, and gets the benefit of this identity in the shape of recognition, or the content itself is novel and the accompanying mass of undifferentiated consciousness already familiar, and the distinction is due to the effects of novelty, but in either case the general condition involved is the same, viz. the partial identity of the present contents of consciousness with its habitual contents in the past. Thus, in both cases the rise of experience, as distinguished from merely "feeling" consciousness, seems to depend in the last resort upon repetition of identical stimulus in a varying content. Hence it is at least conceivable that in the early stages of our own ante-natal existence some vague consciousness may have been developed before the repetition of partially identical stimuli had made the first simple distinction between a conscious content and its setting of general organic sensation possible.[1] On the other hand, experience, as we understand the word,

Such a doctrine I believe we are entitled summarily to rule out of court till it is made plain to us how there can be an experience with no unity, an experience that nobody has." As to the question of terminology, we may fully concur in the dictum that a psychical life which is not a unity built up out of a multitude of varying contents does not deserve the name of an experience. As to the question of *fact*, however, can we not at least conceive, as suggested in the passage quoted in the text from Mr. Bradley, of a life confined to a single feeling, and if so, would such a life offer any possibility of distinguishing between the fact of presentation and the "feeling" presented? It is precisely the fact insisted on by Dr. Ward, that sensation, as *we* know it, is always the *experience* of *some one*, that seems to me to call for explanation. On this point I am glad to believe myself in substantial agreement with Dr. S. Hodgson (*Metaphysic of Experience*, i. 39).

[1] I do not forget the point on which Mr. Stout lays so much stress (*Analytical Psychology*, ii. 7 ff.), that mere repetition of a stimulus commonly fails to lead to recognition apart from the existence of "an interest in some kind of whole of which the object forms part." I take it the first contents to be recognised as recurring are such as have, in virtue of their marked pleasure or pain values for the organism, just such an interest attaching to them.

includes states much more primitive than any which can be identified in purely human experience. It is a feature not only of human, but of much, if not of all, animal life. It is thus not to be confounded with that highly developed and exceedingly complex form of consciousness which is generally known as the perception of "external objects." The perception of an "object," in the ordinary acceptation of the term, implies the recognition of a host of distinctions which scarcely seem to exist during the first few months of life even for the human consciousness.[1] And, in our mature life, there are experiences which we should very properly hesitate to call experiences of *objects*. Thus we certainly "experience" a toothache or a thrill of pleasure, though no one would call either the pain in the tooth or the feeling of pleasure an "object." In another connection it might be interesting to discuss the question how much is involved in the perception of what we commonly call objects, over and above that simple identification of an identically recurring element in the contents of consciousness which we have named "experience." For our present purpose, however, further investigation on this point seems superfluous. We will only add to what we have already said, that it follows from our account of "experience" that we or any animal may be said to have experience just in so far as we "attend to" or are "aware" of the contents of consciousness, or again, just in so far as we are capable of "learning," in consequence of the nature of those contents, to modify or control our first instinctive ways of reacting against our environment.[2] For "attending to" or "being aware" of a presentation seems to be no more than another name for the fact that that presentation is successful in detaching itself more or less

[1] *e.g.* resistance, extension in three dimensions, definite shape.

[2] Thus in practice the measure of an animal's capacity to "experience" will be the degree to which it succeeds in adapting its primitive and instinctive reactions to special variations in the stimulus by which they are provoked. And we shall naturally conclude that, where the lines of instinctive reaction are comparatively fixed and rigid, and admit of little purposive and progressive specialisation, as seems to be the case with insects, there is little or no "experience," but where, as among the higher vertebrates, instinctive reactions are relatively plastic, ill-defined, and capable of great and progressive specialisation, there is also true "experience." For an excellent example of the kind of progressive adaptation which is evidence of the possession of "experience," see what Nansen relates of the changes in the habits of the blubber-nosed seal consequent on the rise of the fishery in 1876 (*First Crossing of Greenland*, chap. vi. *ad fin.*). That these changes are due to experience and not to natural selection alone seems clear from our statement.

completely from the larger mass of undifferentiated consciousness by which it is, on any occasion of its occurrence, attended, and it is, again, just in proportion as a given presentation thus detaches itself from its varying setting that it becomes possible to make it the signal for a definite movement of reaction, or in other words, to learn from it how to behave when it recurs.[1]

So much, then, for "experience," now a word as to the meaning of the term "fact of experience." Not everything which is experienced is a fact of experience. For instance, when a man "sees" a ghost or "hears" a banshee cry, he is undoubtedly experiencing something, but few of us would be prepared on his testimony to accept the ghost or the banshee as facts guaranteed by experience. And we might, again, be doubtful how far the "experiences" related at a Wesleyan class-meeting present a really faithful description of the *facts* of the narrator's spiritual life. In a word, a fact of experience seems to mean the contents of a *true* description of our experience; and by a true description, again, we mean an account of the matter which is, so far as we can see, free from internal confusion or discrepancy, in fact, a *consistent* narrative. If the statement that truth is altogether a matter of internal consistency at first appears strange, its strangeness is only a result of our vicious but inveterate habit of forgetting that the experiences of every conscious subject form a continuous and unbroken whole,[2] and of treating mere fragments and scraps torn from their

[1] I need hardly say that "attention" is used here to denote not merely that supreme degree of exclusive pre-occupation with a connected system of contents which is ordinarily so called, but any and every degree of concentration of consciousness upon the identical qualities which characterise the repeated presentation of a given content to the comparative neglect of the accompanying organic and other sensations. For some good remarks on the connection of attention with recognition see H. Cornelius, *Psychologie als Erfahrungs-Wissenschaft*, p. 35.

[2] I do not mean to say that there are no breaches in the continuity of our conscious life, for instance in moments of dreamless sleep, but simply that, if such gaps exist, they do not directly reveal themselves as such. This seems to be proved by the fact that no one has as yet been able to say whether the supposed suspension of consciousness in dreamless sleep, trance, etc., is more than a mere hypothesis. H. Cornelius, indeed (*Psychologie*, p. 120), asserts that on awaking from sleep we are immediately and directly conscious that there has been a pause in consciousness, apparently for the reason given on the next page, that many or most of us seem able to say with fair accuracy how long we have slept. There can be no doubt about the fact, but I should have thought the most probable explanation was that we have here a mediate judgment based on our past experience of the regularity and rate of the organic processes of digestion, etc., which have been going on during our sleep. In any case, we are not directly aware that consciousness has been altogether suspended, but only that our consciousness of the familiar objects which we recognise again on awaking has been *interrupted*.

proper position and context in such a whole as if they were independent realities that could stand by themselves. It is, of course, true that a description of supposed facts of my experience which seems consistent enough when taken by itself has often to be discarded as unsatisfactory because it cannot be made to harmonise with the rest of my experience, but in all such cases where statements based upon one part of my experience, taken apart from the parts with which it really stands in vital connection, are corrected by comparison with the rest of experience, the standard of truth and adequacy of statement to which the appeal is made is, of course, the internal coherency and consistency of my account of my experience taken as a whole. Nor would it be a pertinent criticism to say that a statement which is consistent with all the facts which enter into my own experience may nevertheless be shown to be false by comparison with facts which form the experience of some other person. This is no doubt true, but yet for all that *I* have no ground for treating the supposed experience of another person as a reason for modifying a statement borne out by my own experience, except in so far as certain utterances or actions of the other person form an element in my own experience which refuses to harmonise with my statement. It may well be, for instance, that I am content to believe on the authority of Helmholtz or some other eminent man of science that the Newtonian theory of light is inconsistent with the phenomena of experience, though my own observation would never have led me to suspect the truth of the theory; but it must not be forgotten that the ultimate ground of my conviction in such a case, viz. the difficulty of reconciling a belief in the antiquated theory with what I know of the position, reputation, and character of its antagonists, is always something that does fall within the limits of my own personal experience. Be a theory false or true, so long as it affords a consistent and adequate description of my own personal experience, *I* at least have no reason to treat it as false. Without committing ourselves to the paradox of Solipsism, we can well afford to make the admission that the difference between truth and falsehood means ultimately for each individual the difference between an adequate and consistent, and an inadequate and inconsistent account of the contents of his own personal experience.

What has no bearing on and is not represented in some way in my own personal life is, for me at least, a mere nothing. For me, as for one of Leibnitz's monads, the universe only exists in so far as it succeeds in mirroring itself in the course of my own inner life.

We can now see what was implied in our assertion that science consists in the full and coherent description of facts of experience. We mean, of course, in the first place that science, like the unsystematic everyday thinking which precedes it, and out of which it arises, aims primarily at the correlation of facts of experience, at supplying links and threads of connection by means of which we may safely infer from the nature of our present experiences what we might expect to experience under different conditions of time, of place, of material environment. By supplying such links, which are themselves inaccessible to direct observation, science teaches us to infer from what is happening now what will happen to-morrow, from what I experience on the surface of the earth what I should experience if I could be placed on the surface of Venus or Mars, from the observed effects of the creation of a partial vacuum what would be found to follow if I could create a perfect vacuum, etc. Thus we might say science begins its operations with experienced matters of fact as its data, and though the hypotheses by the aid of which it proceeds are often, as we shall see directly, of a kind that can in no sense be called matters of fact or experience, its object in the use of them is to lead up once more to the knowledge of things that will, or would under specified conditions, be matters of fact and experience. But this is by no means all. In a science which should adequately realise the ideal of explanation which all sciences set before themselves, the connecting-links or hypothetical constructions by which science does its work would themselves in their turn be at least possible contents of experience. This requisite of scientific method is expressed in the technical language of the logicians by the demand that the causes assigned in a scientific explanation of phenomena should be *verae causae*, or should be known actually to exist. This does not, of course, mean that the existence and operation of the causes and forces in question should be matter of direct observation under normal conditions of experience, but that under a

special combination of more or less definitely ascertained conditions, they should become accessible to direct experience. In so far as the explanations which any science professes to give of phenomena fail to fulfil this condition, they remain, as we commonly say, matters of hypothesis, and it is by showing that the state of things required by the hypothesis is, or as far as we can judge would be, matter of actual experience under certain definite conditions, that a hypothesis is transformed into a theory and a merely "hypothetical" into a "real" account of phenomena.

I may illustrate my meaning further by a simple example. Most men of average education, I suppose, would say, for instance, that the doctrine of the corpuscular constitution of matter is an established theory, the existence of a luminiferous ether a probable hypothesis, the existence of ghosts an improbable or even a false hypothesis. Now what is the difference between these three cases? In each case the existence of something which is, under normal conditions, not accessible to direct experience is alleged as the explanation of events which can be directly experienced, but whereas the explanation is in the first case commonly admitted as true, it is in the second most usually regarded as doubtful, and in the third as probably or certainly false. The ground of our judgment in the third case is not far to seek. One might at the first blush suppose that a ghost had more claim to be regarded as a *causa vera* than either an imponderable undulating medium or a system of molecules, for no one has ever seen such a thing as a molecule or an imponderable ether, while many persons profess to have seen ghosts. But the radical vice of the belief in ghosts seems to be that it creates more difficulties than it solves. A statement asserting the existence of ghosts leads to more incoherencies and discrepancies in our accounts of the contents of experience taken as a whole than it removes. You get, *e.g.*, the difficulty of which Mr. Spencer makes so much, that there seems as much reason to believe in ghosts of clothes as in ghosts of men. Moreover, the persons who profess to have seen ghosts are almost invariably just the classes whose accounts of their own experiences we know in other cases to be most inconsistent in themselves, and most at variance with those of other men—the ignorant, the nervous, etc. Hence,

judged by our standard of internal consistency, any statement of "facts," any account of the contents of experience, which introduces the agency of ghosts has at least a strong presumption against it. The case of the hypothetical ethereal medium for the transmission of light-waves is different and even more instructive. As far as one who, like myself, is altogether a layman in these matters can perceive, the hesitation which many well-instructed persons seem to feel about admitting the existence of such a medium is due entirely to the feeling that it is not, as far as we know, a *causa vera*. Under no conditions of which we know has the existence of such a medium as the theory requires ever been the part of an actually experienced content. Nor can we imagine any conditions under which its existence and qualities ever could be experienced. The whole region of directly experienced existence presents us with nothing in the least analogous to the all-pervading, unatomic, perfectly elastic, and non-gravitating medium which is hypothetically assumed to account for the phenomena of the transmission of light. Hence it would seem, at least if our assumption as to the facts of the case is correct, that the existence of such a medium must always remain more or less hypothetical. As a working hypothesis the theory justifies itself, if the deductions which we make from it about the course of observable events tally with the results of actual observation, but it still remains a question whether our hypothesis, useful as it is for working purposes, is a real hypothesis or not, that is, whether the intermediate links which it interposes between the data of experience from which it starts and the conclusions, verifiable in actual experience, which it infers from those data could themselves, under any conceivable conditions, be the contents or a part of the contents of an actual experience. With the atomic theory the case is, in the opinion of some of its adherents at any rate, different. It is, of course, true that we can no more see an atom than we can see the supposed medium through which light-undulations are propagated. But while experience presented us with no analogue whatever of the luminiferous ether, it does present us with bodies which in some of their qualities do exhibit an analogy with the supposed atom. And again, it has been found possible to calculate the number of atoms contained in a given volume of

a given substance, and if these calculations have any serious value, it is clear that they do amount to an approximate statement of the conditions under which the corpuscular constitution of bodies might be made a content of actual experience; to know the size of an atom means to know approximately how many diameters it would have to be magnified in order to become visible under the microscope. Thus both because the theory of the atomic, or at any rate of the corpuscular[1] constitution of matter presents a close analogy with the state of things disclosed in actual experience, and because it seems possible, within certain limits at any rate, to know something of the conditions under which its assumptions themselves might be made matter of direct experience, this theory stands on an entirely different footing, in respect of its "reality" and truth to fact, from an hypothesis like that by which the phenomena of the transmission of light are now explained.[2] In the one case the state of things asserted by scientific hypothesis is not altogether too remote from what we can find on a large scale as the result of direct experiment and observation of the constitution of large masses of matter, and the conditions under which this state of things might be put to the test of direct experience, though unrealisable in practice, —for of course we cannot, for instance, grind a lens powerful enough to magnify a molecule into visibility, or construct a balance delicate enough to indicate its weight,—at least admit of consistent theoretical formulation. In the other case the combination of properties ascribed to the ethereal medium by the hypothesis is entirely unlike any combination with which experience, whether at the level of unsystematic everyday observation or at that of careful scientific observation of phenomena, presents us, and it seems impossible to imagine any set of conditions under which this disagreement between actual experience and scientific theory would cease to exist. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the corpuscular theory

[1] I add this qualifying clause, of course, to meet the objection that absolute *indivisibility* could never be directly experienced.

[2] But it must be remembered that, as Dr. Ward so admirably argues (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*, i. 109 f.), the individual chemical molecule as such is never a presented reality. Its proportions and properties are all reached by statistics which rest upon the examination of considerable masses, and the results thus obtained *may* have only the same value as those of economic and anthropological "averages." The "typical" atom or molecule of oxygen may be as much a creature of theory as the "typical" labourer or the "typical" Australian.

represents "facts" of experience much more accurately than the undulatory hypothesis. The latter, for all we can see, may perfectly well be a mere "symbolic" representation of the processes of nature; that is, it may serve as a convenient working hypothesis, by the aid of which correct inferences may be made from one set of experienced contents to another, and yet the intermediate links of theory by which the inference is brought about may as they stand be as purely imaginary as the irrational quantities which play so prominent a part in symbolic algebra.

Putting together the results we have arrived at in the last paragraph, we may say the ideal of scientific explanation is explanation by reference to a *causa vera*, that is, the resolution of the complex processes of change with which experience presents us into simpler processes, in which every term is such as would, under definitely known conditions, be itself directly experienced. Or, more in detail, in a scientific explanation which satisfies our ideals of complete explanation, the terms which are not accessible under normal conditions to direct experience ought to contain nothing (*a*) that is known to be inconsistent with the formal conditions of experience in general, and also (*b*) nothing known to be inconsistent with the material conditions of the experience of the terms themselves. Thus a finally satisfactory scientific explanation would consist from beginning to end of actual or possible contents of experience, and would, in fact, correspond to the important philosophic concept, which we owe to Avenarius,[1] of a "pure" experience—*i.e.* an experience of a content "which in all its component parts has for its presupposition constituents of our environment and nothing else," or, as he also expresses it, "an experience free from all admixture of anything which is not itself experience." And it is this ideal of explanation which we had in view in speaking of the object of science as the "complete and consistent *description* of the facts of experience in the simplest possible terms." It need hardly be said, however, that this is an ideal to which no science ever in practice attains. Every science, in its explanations and calculations, makes a greater or less

[1] *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, i. 4-5; *Philosophie als Denken der Welt*, etc., pp. 42-44.

use of terms which are, or, for all we know, may be merely symbols for events and processes which we are as yet unable to apprehend, and perhaps never shall succeed in apprehending, in a form consistent with the formal or the material conditions of experience. In geometry, for instance, we have the circular points at infinity, in algebra the square roots of negative quantities, in theology transubstantiation.[1] As it stands, the symbol $\sqrt{-1}$ is a downright contradiction; it tells you to perform on -1 the same arithmetical operation which when performed on 4, say, gives us 2, and from the nature of the case the operation in question is impossible. Hence, until you bring your symbol once more into touch with experienced reality by giving to the signs $-$ and $\sqrt{\ }$ a new meaning, according to which they stand for some operation of which we have actual experience, $\sqrt{-1}$ is a merely "symbolic" or "imaginary" quantity; it represents an operation which may be introduced into the subsidiary steps of an actual calculation with useful results, but which remains in its real nature as much of a mystery to the operator as the electric spark to the child whose hand touches the key by which a circuit is broken.

In so far, then, as any science falls back in its search for explanations upon such mere symbols of unknown processes, it falls short of the true ideal of scientific explanation, and its account of phenomena fails to reach the level of "pure" experience. Hence we can see exactly how much truth there is in the view of "explanation" which makes it consist in something more than mere description. It is of course true that the explanations given by any science must always transcend such description as is possible apart from the most thorough-going and minute analysis of natural objects and processes. It is false, however, to say that explanation must transcend the complete description of phenomena reduced to their simplest terms. For the very ideal of explanation is, as we have seen, the description of experienced phenomena in

[1] I borrow the first and last of these illustrations from Clifford's *Common Sense of the Exact Sciences*, chap. iv. (contributed by Professor Karl Pearson), p. 223. I may remark that the change in the significance of $\sqrt{-1}$, as we pass from ordinary algebra to quaternions, is a good example of the way in which a mere symbol of an impossible operation may by an alteration of interpretation be made to represent a real "fact" or operation actually possible in experience. Cf. *Common Sense of the Exact Sciences*, p. 190.

terms which are in their turn matters of experienced facts—in terms, to use the convenient phrase of Avenarius, of pure experience. The notion that explanation must always transcend description as such arises simply from failure to see that the "symbolic" explanations of our existing sciences, which are in no sense descriptions of matters of possible experience, are due to mere imperfection of knowledge, and need in their turn, as science progresses, to be retranslated into the language of possible experience before they can be accepted as the truth about anything. It is this misconception of the relation between explanation and description which has begotten all that host of pretentious explanations of phenomena by reference to faculties and occult qualities and forces against which Positivism has, to its credit, done yeoman's service. And it is to the same secret delusion that we owe it that philosophers still allow themselves to be perplexed by the infinite contradictions and obscurities inherent in the confused popular ideas of activity and causation,[1] two mere "symbolic" concepts which will surely vanish for ever from our text-books as soon as we seriously set ourselves to translate our metaphysical symbolism back into language which has a definite meaning as applied to the actual processes given in experience. In short, though the statement that scientific explanation is always

[1] For an account of these confusions see, besides the chapters on "Causation" and "Activity" in *Appearance and Reality*, Avenarius, *Philosophie als Denken*, etc., pp. 45, 46. The same tendency to rest in merely "symbolic" statements, *i.e.* explanations which explain nothing, shows itself in the fondness of "spiritualist" philosophers for vague expressions such as "force" and "energy." What definite ideas, for instance, can we connect with the current phrases "spiritual force," "psychical energy"? It would be an excellent discipline for a writer on philosophical topics to substitute for the word "force," wherever it occurs in the course of his reasoning, some more definite expression, such as "rate of change of momentum." "Energy," again, should never be used to denote anything that cannot be calculated in terms of mass and velocity, without a preliminary attempt to point out the aspect of experienced reality for which the term is being made to stand. Compare the excellent remarks (of Professor Karl Pearson) on mass and force in Clifford's *Common Sense of the Exact Sciences*, pp. 269-71. The following sentences may serve as an example of the kind of vague language which is still too common even with accredited writers. "No genuine scientific endeavour is satisfied with mere description. In the stricter meaning of the word, *science* only begins when a knowledge of conditions and causes is joined with a knowledge of facts. The psychologist always keeps this aim steadily in sight. He too is never satisfied simply to know what the facts are, but ever strives to ascertain under what conditions and as due to what determining causes the facts occur" (G. T. Ladd, *Outlines of Descriptive Psychology*, p. 7). Apart from some definition, which is nowhere given, of the terms "explanation," "description," "fact," "determining causes," it seems impossible to conjecture exactly what the distinction here drawn meant to the writer, or to set any limit to the confusions and vagaries it might suggest to the "beginners" to whom it is addressed.

something more than mere description would be justified if by description were meant any rough and ready account of a complicated natural process as it appears to the unscientific eye, it is absolutely false as against such description as we have been contemplating. The man who maintains that no description can ever amount to an explanation is mistaking the inevitable imperfections of our science for its highest ideal, and is logically bound to deny the existence of any distinction between hypothesis and fact. Every fact, we are sometimes told, is an hypothesis. This is of course true if by a "fact" one means merely the first incipient description of the processes of experienced reality. Such descriptions are necessarily superficial and defective, and may often also be of the merely "symbolic" type. (*E.g.* one may hear it stated that "it is a *fact* that volition *causes* movement," or that "every material particle *exerts an attractive force* upon all others.") But if by fact we mean full and adequate description of experienced reality, the case is different. Adequate description, "pure" experience would be ultimately identical with fully-established "theory," not with mere "hypothesis." If all "facts" are concealed hypotheses, every hypothesis is an inadequate attempt to reach "fact."[1]

All knowledge, then, according to our view, is "empirical" in the sense of being concerned in the last resort with the description of matters of fact or experience. But not all the branches of study treat the experienced facts which it is their business to ascertain and describe in one and the same way. The attitude of each of the ordinary departmental sciences to the great body of experienced facts which make up the life of the world may be said to be characterised at once by more or less strict limitation of range of vision, and by the endeavour, within a limited range, to take account of all important or typical facts. Comparative narrowness of range and accompanying fulness of detail within that range, these are the distinctive marks of the sciences which are

[1] Thus it is not the knowledge aimed at by the physical sciences only, but all knowledge which takes complete and adequate description as its ideal. From the idealist standpoint the defect of the "mechanical" theories of the physical world is not their supposed substitution of description for "explanation," but their failure to detect the inveterate "symbolism" of their descriptive apparatus. They confuse not "explanation" and description, but inadequate description of a single aspect of experience and adequate description of the whole.

called sometimes "natural," sometimes "positive," sometimes "empirical," in each case with a certain conscious opposition to more "philosophical" or "metaphysical" or "speculative" forms of study. A well-defined and organised department of science has always more or less accurately drawn boundaries within which to look for the facts that form its peculiar subject-matter. Of whatever facts fall within these limits, the science, if brought to completion, ought to afford a satisfactory account; whatever facts fall entirely without them may be treated, for the purposes of that particular science, as if they had no existence.

It does, of course, happen in the progress of science that sets of facts which at first appeared wholly disconnected, and were therefore originally treated separately, are found to cohere so closely together as to demand treatment in intimate connection with one another and by a common method. Whenever this happens we get a readjustment of intellectual boundary lines, by which what have hitherto been regarded as distinct branches of knowledge become henceforth one in subject and method. And on the other hand, bodies of fact which, in the infancy of science, seemed so much alike as to form the province of a single scientific inquiry are found, as our knowledge of the details of natural processes increases, to exhibit such a complexity and variety of typical forms as to furnish the materials for a plurality of more or less independent groups of investigations. It is by this double process of fusion and of fissure that the gradual evolution of organised knowledge has been and is being accomplished. But it is at least not easy to believe that the process of progressive organisation is capable of indefinite extension. It is, for instance, very hard to imagine that the phenomena of chemical combination and the phenomena of the moral life should ever be brought, in their fulness, within the bounds of a single branch of inquiry. In the present state of the sciences, at any rate, the facts of the mental life are as completely disregarded by most of the "physical" sciences as though they had no existence at all, while psychology in its turn is able to ignore the reality of all but a select few of the facts which constitute the whole of the physicist's world.

As a matter of experience, we are of course all aware that any observed physical event, such as those recorded in the description of a chemical or electrical experiment is but a fragment more or less arbitrarily severed from the rest of the concrete experience in which it forms a part. Mental facts, such as hopes and fears, fixations and relaxations of attention, accompany every physical experiment we can make, and form with it a single indivisible experience, but one may perfectly well work through a text-book of physics or chemistry or electricity without coming across the admission that there is such a thing as a feeling or an emotion in the world. Every one of the departmental sciences works, in this fashion, upon mere mutilated fragments of real experience violently torn away from the setting in which they actually come to us, and this is what is meant by the philosophers who tell us that, as compared with metaphysical philosophy, all other sciences are "abstract" in their point of view. They are interested only in some one side or aspect of our many-sided experience, and they, therefore, with a justifiable disregard of fact, treat the one side in which they are interested as if it were the only one that there is. For practical purposes this one-sidedness does not matter, so long as a science is successful in establishing links of connection and detecting uniformities within that special aspect of experience to which it avowedly confines its attention; it is only when, as philosophers, we try to form some general conception of the nature of experienced reality as a whole, that it becomes important to insist on this peculiarity of scientific procedure, and to beware of being led, by overlooking it, into taking as the fundamental character of all reality what may be true only of some one aspect or part within the whole.

So much, then, for the attitude of "science" towards the facts of experience; let us now try to describe the very different attitude of metaphysical philosophy. Science, as we have seen, regularly begins by severing some one class of experienced contents from their surroundings, and then proceeds to describe as elaborately and completely as possible the uniform relations which it can detect within the class of experienced realities thus arbitrarily singled out. Reflection will easily convince us, however, that we might con-

ceivably operate with the facts of experience on a different plan. Instead of taking a part of the facts of life and trying to get as much detailed insight into them as possible, we may conceivably sit down to study experience and experienced facts broadly as a whole, and to ask, without attending to special matters of detail, whether we can detect any general characteristics which belong, not to this or that class of facts or to this or that aspect of experience, but to the facts of life or the contents of experience viewed as a whole. If any such most fundamental characteristics of the world of experience are to be discovered, we clearly have in them the materials for such a science as was called by Aristotle "Theology" or "First Philosophy," and by his editors "Metaphysics"—a science, that is, which aims at enunciating results which shall be true of things not merely in so far as they have extension, or outline, or movement, or any other special quality by which some one subsidiary class of experienced facts is differentiated from others, but universally and without restriction of all experienced contents whatever (*ἐπιστήμη ὄντων ᾗ ὄντων*).[1]

It need hardly be said that in admitting the conceivability of such a science we are in no way claiming the license to construct merely fanciful or speculative hypotheses about the constitution of things, in independence or in defiance of the revelations of ordinary experiment and observation. For after all we have nothing but our knowledge of the details of experience, whether gained in everyday life or by the stricter methods of the "empirical" sciences, upon which to base our philosophic inquiries, and, as a matter of fact, our description of the science we are contemplating would be as applicable to the notions of such "unmetaphysical" thinkers as Avenarius and Herbert Spencer about the proper sphere and scope of philosophy as to those of Aristotle. Further reflection may well persuade us that a science like that of which we are in search is not only conceivable, but actually possible.[2] For we can see at once that, with all their infinite

[1] For a discussion of the points of *difference* between the Aristotelian philosophy of "Being" and such a philosophy of experience as is spoken of in the text, I may refer to my article on "The Metaphysical Problem" in the *International Journal of Ethics* for April 1900.

[2] For the difference of meaning between the often confounded terms "conceivable" and "possible," see Avenarius, *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, i. 27.

diversity, the facts of life present at least one common characteristic. Whatever else they may be, the facts upon which all our sciences are founded are all what the German language, for once proving superior to our own, can describe by the convenient word *Erlebnisse*, things through which we have lived, bits of the experience of individual centres of thought and feeling. And since the ultimate aim of all the sciences is, as we have seen, to give such an account of the facts of experience as shall be consistent with appearances and with itself, we may fairly say that all scientific progress consists in the more and more adequate rendering of experience, or in the freeing of our descriptions of experience from the "symbolic" elements which, as we have seen, enter so largely into our scientific hypotheses.

Science, in fact, at its different levels is nothing more or less than experience in the process of becoming fully consistent with itself and free from all admixture of "symbolical" or non-experiental hypothesis.[1] Scientific thinking would have reached its goal and done its work if it could succeed in taking into account the whole body of the experience of ourselves and of all sentient beings as a single system, and in giving a description of the contents of that system in which every term were itself under exactly specified conditions matter of direct experience. We are thus led by reflection on the nature of scientific progress to the conception of the scientific ideal as a perfect or completed or pure experience, an experience which embraces not some merely, but all the events and processes which are the contents of the experience of ourselves and all other centres of thought and feeling, and beholds them as a single coherent and harmonious system, without any of the gaps, confusions, and contradictions inseparable from imperfect and "symbolic" knowledge. Such an all-embracing and finally consistent experience would in every case see things "as they really are." Theory for it would be one with direct experience, and thus for it the ideals at which we are consciously or unconsciously aiming in all our thinking would be translated into actual facts. Whether such a complete or "pure"

[1] I can only refer to the masterly description of this ideal in Avenarius, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt.*

experience, with the whole of reality for its object, actually exists is a question which need not and must not be raised at this stage of our argument, but even if we suppose it to be nothing more than a mere "regulative ideal" which actual knowledge is always approaching but never reaches, it is easy to see its enormous value. For it clearly affords us a standard or criterion by which to measure the degree of truth contained in the various conceptions of the general character of the world of reality with which we meet in the course of our ordinary everyday reflections on life and the world, as well as in our more strictly scientific thinking, and thus supplies us with a starting-point and a principle for our metaphysics.

As we have said already, though all thinking, scientific and otherwise, has for its subject-matter the facts of experience, and for its aim the discovery of simple, adequate, and consistent ways of representing those facts, yet none of our scientific or unscientific hypotheses about the world succeed in realising their ideal in more than an approximate degree. Our previous statements on this point have indeed been only partially accurate; in so far as our language about the "facts" upon which the sciences are based has sometimes apparently countenanced the notion that the "facts" are a given quantity which are there and can be accurately known before the work of "thought" or reflection is begun, it is liable to a serious misconstruction, against which we must now protest. Our expressions, which have been chosen so as to insist in the strongest possible way that what is real means something which we do not *make* but *find*, or, at least, make in accordance with laws of construction which are not themselves of our own making, must now be modified by the further consideration that the "facts of life," in the sense in which they are identical with this reality which we do not make but find, mean not the "facts" as they are seen by the untutored eye of immediate and unreflecting perception, but the "facts" as they appear to the experience which has arrived at an all-embracing and coherent view of the whole system to which they belong. Though the truth about reality is, as we say, *found* and not made, it is not to be found without a preliminary process of search. Thus in any

particular department of science the "facts" in a certain observation or experiment wear a very different aspect for the skilled investigator from that which the same "facts" present to the tyro. What the trained eye sees under the microscope is far from being the same confused mass of bewildering details which meets the eye of the puzzled layman, who lacks, as popular speech rightly expresses it, "experience" in using the instrument. As we proceed upward from the first crude attempts of dawning intelligence to understand its own experiences, through the various levels of untrained and half-trained reflection, to the thoroughly organised and disciplined thinking of self-conscious science, what we call the same body of facts or experiences is constantly growing in fulness of discriminated details, as well as in definiteness and intelligibility of structure, at each successive step. So that, in the last resort, no science can be said to give a thoroughly truthful and adequate representation of "experience" or of "facts," except one, if there be such a one, which includes all the material of experience, and that with a thoroughly consistent insight into the structure of that material.

These considerations will assist us to define sufficiently for our purpose the procedure of metaphysics. Though, as we can easily see, we cannot, on the basis of our own imperfect knowledge of the world, say in detail what would be the contents of such a pure, or complete, or absolute experience as we have found to be the ideal of science,[1] we can clearly lay it down as a general principle that nothing could enter into such an experience which does not conform to the general formal conditions of all experience as such. If in any of our theories about things there is an element which cannot be translated into terms of contents of actual or possible experience without involving a contradiction, then the theory, as it stands, is weighted with inadmissible elements of hypothesis; it is not an adequate rendering of experience, is not ultimately the full truth about the facts. There is room, therefore, in the general scheme of human

[1] And hence Plato very rightly speaks of the "good," *i.e.* the completed apprehension of the world as a single organic unity, as "actually transcending real existence in dignity and power" (*Rep.* 509 B).

knowledge for a system of metaphysics which shall be at one and the same time both constructive and critical. It is the function of metaphysics as a constructive science to discover and formulate those most general formal conditions of experience with which any description of matter of fact which can be accepted as ultimately true must, as we have seen, agree; as a critical discipline, the business of metaphysics is to test the various theories and propositions which pass for true in our everyday thinking or in our sciences by comparison with the ideal standard of a "pure" or perfect experience, and to decide how far all or any of them satisfy the two requirements of agreement with the formal conditions of experience in general and with the material conditions of the particular experiences which they claim to represent. Thus, on the constructive side, a science of metaphysics ought to provide us with at least a rudimentary and elementary conception of the general character which belongs to the world of experience as a whole, and, on the critical side, it ought to be of the utmost service in exhibiting the contradictions and imperfections of all attempts to apply to the world of experience as a whole categories which are only adequate to represent isolated aspects of it. In both its constructive and its critical aspect such a science consists throughout simply in the consistent application of the two elementary principles, that a description of experienced fact, to be fully true, must represent all the facts, and must represent them without contradiction.

From all this it is clear that neither metaphysics nor any other branch of knowledge can really give us that final and utterly adequate picture of experience which is sometimes spoken of under the name of "absolute" truth. The departmental or non-metaphysical sciences fail to do so because, as we have seen, they depend for their very existence upon a kind of systematic *suppressio veri*; they have necessarily to mutilate experience in order to deal with it, as they do, piecemeal. And further, every one of the departmental sciences indulges not only in the *suppressio veri*, but also in the *suggestio falsi* which usually accompanies suppressions of the truth. They not only do not give us the whole truth; what truth they do give us comes to us largely mixed with

"symbolic" hypotheses and concepts which are no part of the truth. Metaphysics, assuming that metaphysics exists, avoids at least this second source of error. By dragging to light the confusions and contradictions inherent in our "symbolic" concepts and hypotheses, it disengages the truly experiential elements in our scientific theories from the admixture of non-experiential and therefore unthinkable material with which they are contaminated. In so far as it is true to its own leading principles, it thus alone of all branches of study presents us with a description of experience which contains no terms but such as are themselves matters of experience, and may therefore fairly claim the unique merit of offering us nothing but the truth.

It is not, however, equally successful in attaining the whole truth. Unlike the other sciences, indeed, it avowedly takes cognisance of the facts of experience in their entirety, and not of mere isolated aspects of the facts, but it can only succeed in thus dealing with facts and with life as a whole on condition of treating them in mere outline, and with a complete disregard of detail. At the best metaphysics on its constructive side can only hope to discover the formal conditions of experience in general; it is powerless to ascertain the material conditions of any particular set of experiences. Thus a final and absolute insight into the facts of existence as they would be found to be by a completed experience is from the very nature of the case no more than an unattainable ideal, which has at best a "regulative" value for our scientific thinking. If, however, it is possible to discover with certainty even the most general and formal characteristics which would belong to the contents of a "pure" or completed experience as such, the science which deals with these characteristics, though far from being identical with "the absolute truth about the world," would at least be a kind of knowledge which, unlike any other, was so far final that its outlines would be in need merely of filling in with detail, and not of actual alteration, in order to make them the "absolute truth."

Now such a science we have in metaphysics. Metaphysics aims at discovering, if possible, the general or formal characteristics which must belong to a fully completed and

systematic experience of the world merely as systematic and as experience, apart from consideration of the special character of the details of the system. Its first principles are, (1) what is real is experience, and (2) what is real is not self-contradictory; and it is in dependence on these principles that it attempts, in its critical aspect, to discuss the claims of the systems described by the several sciences to be identical with the complete world of experience. The very generality which metaphysics affects in itself prevents it from telling us in full *what* the real world is. Indeed, it would be impossible to give a full answer to such a question without transcending the forms of universality and relational predication which are common to all sciences and all knowledge, but this imperfection does not in any way debar metaphysics from confronting the theories and hypotheses of the other sciences with the general characteristics of experience as a whole, and thus testing *their* claim to supply the missing knowledge. Its principal business may thus be said to be that of perpetually modifying the pretensions of every other form of thought by reminding it of the existence of aspects of experience of which it has taken no account, as well as by testing the inner coherency of its descriptions of facts which it does claim to consider. In this way the abstractness and incompleteness inherent in metaphysical knowledge itself need not prevent it from having a great deal to say upon such questions as whether, *e.g.*, "matter in motion" or "a kingdom of selves" are categories which furnish an adequate and coherent account of the general character of the whole system of experienced fact.

Such, as we conceive it, is the true function and scope of metaphysics. It is a science which, starting from the conception, involved in all our notions of scientific progress, of a complete and consistent formulation of experience, aims at discovering the general characteristics of such an account of experience, and at comparing the various pictures of the world given by the several sciences and by the unsystematic thinking of everyday life with this ideal. And as the futility of such investigations could only be proved by a counter-appeal to a metaphysical theory of first principles, we may fairly claim that the description of the aims and objects

of the science of itself affords sufficient justification for its existence.[1]

What then, we now go on to ask, would be the distinguishing characteristics of a subordinate science based upon the results of such an inquiry into the formal conditions of experience as we have just described? The answer to this question is not very far to seek. It is clear in the first place that one of the chief advantages possessed by such a science would be that its sphere and subject-matter would be defined and circumscribed with exceptional exactness. We ought, in the case of such a science, to be able to say with certainty and definiteness precisely *what* the lesser system of experienced fact contains, and *how* it stands related to the wider and all-embracing system of experienced fact which constitutes the metaphysician's real world; where the lesser system begins and where it leaves off. Any uncertainty about the boundary lines of our science, any failure to define with complete and perfect accuracy the subject-matter of its investigations, means that we cannot say with precision what is the reality which we are investigating, or how, for a completed experience of the whole of reality, the point of view of our science would be modified by the inclusion in one system of the aspects of existence contemplated by it and by the other departmental sciences. Before psychology, for instance, could become, as philosophers have often tried to make it, a branch of applied metaphysics, we should need to know with perfect precision how the individual human mind is related to the human body and to the whole of the universe. In the absence of information on this point, we can never be sure that even the most certain conclusions of the psychologist are not affected *to an unknown degree* with error, in consequence of that original isolation of certain aspects of reality from their concrete setting by which the science of psychology is created.

We may perhaps, in passing, call special attention to the words in the last sentence which we have italicised. The disadvantage under which the non-metaphysical sciences labour is not merely that of containing erroneous and one-

[1] I am glad to observe the close correspondence in general character between my own view of the problem of metaphysics and that taken by Dr. Hodgson in his recent *Metaphysic of Experience*.

sided statements, such as are inseparable from any science which takes less than the whole of reality for its province and subject-matter. They not only fall short of the full truth about things, but they fall short of the truth by an amount which we have no means of estimating with any accuracy. We can see that their views of the world and the processes it contains would have to undergo modification if the facts upon which they are based were brought into relation with all the rest of the, to us unknown, facts of which a complete experience would have to take cognisance, but we know neither the amount of the modification, nor, except in the very vaguest way, its direction. For instance, we may feel confident that the convenient working hypothesis of the "parallelism" between bodily and mental processes is a merely "symbolical" way of representing facts the full nature of which is necessarily unknown to us. We may confidently assert that the process which we are compelled to treat as having the double character of physical and psychical change would appear, from the point of view of an experience complete and "purer" than our own, as a single and indivisible event. But we in our limited experience are utterly without the categories which would be adequate to the representation of such a single concrete psycho-physical process, and are in consequence driven to take refuge in the convenient but entirely unthinkable fiction of "parallel" processes, or a process with two sides to it, the relation between which remains, when all is said, an utter mystery. The unity of mental and bodily life thus is for our science a mere postulate and nothing more. The first step towards placing the science of psychology on a metaphysical basis, if such a thing were possible, would have to be the discovery of some category under which we could consistently represent this unity, which is for us at present expressed as a mere postulate, by hypotheses which we can all see to be merely "symbolic," and therefore, as they stand, untrue.[1]

If an "empirical" science could be successfully turned into a branch of applied metaphysics, it would still of

[1] I venture to think that Dr. Ward's trenchant assault on the doctrine of "parallelism" (*Nat. and Ag.* vol. ii. chap. ii.), however fatal to its claims to afford final metaphysical truth, leaves the question of its practical value as a convenient working hypothesis untouched.

course be constantly necessary in the details of the subordinate science to disregard the great majority of the facts of experience, and thus to fall into convenient errors of abstraction, but it would always be in our power, whenever we thought fit, to correct our own misstatements and half-truths by the aid of our knowledge, as metaphysicians, of the modifications and alterations necessary to bring the facts of our science into relation with the rest of experience as a whole. We should, in fact, be much in the position of a mathematician allowing himself for convenience' sake to simplify a problem by the removal of certain complications which it is always in his power to restore the moment it seems desirable. In the actual state of psychology and the other sciences our position is rather that of an experimenter who suspects all his results to be vitiated by a certain constant error, but is entirely without the means of determining its quantity and direction. If we sometimes hesitate to admit the truth of the Platonic contention, that the results of our "empirical" sciences are after all "opinion," and not "knowledge," the disagreement is due not so much to the improvement of scientific method and the increase of scientific knowledge as to the comparative inadequacy of the ideal of "knowledge" with which we allow ourselves to be content.[1]

This leads me to a further consideration. In a science based upon the results of metaphysics we ought to be able not only to define our subject-matter with accuracy, but also to formulate the leading concepts which our science uses in the interpretation of phenomena in a way that precludes their containing any internal contradictions or any merely "symbolical" and non-experiential elements except such as are known to be such, and can be replaced by more "real" equivalents whenever we choose. For contradiction and incoherency in our scientific categories mean that any readjustment of our science to the larger whole of experienced fact would involve the extensive modification of its leading working ideas. And so again the presence in our explanations of imaginary and symbolic terms means that the hypotheses of our science are at best *mere* working ideas, con-

[1] But we must not forget that the discovery of the calculus of probabilities has made it possible for us, as it could not have been for Plato, so long as we are content to disregard the general limitations of empirical science, and to raise no questions about its ultimate assumptions, to determine the amount and direction of the probable error of our observations.

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fessedly inadequate as representations of concrete and actual processes such as are or might be given in a real experience. And in a science based on metaphysical insight into the character of the real there can be no such things as merely "working" hypotheses or merely provisional explanations, except as mere incidental blemishes and excrescences. If we knew what the "flower in the crannied wall" was, says Tennyson, we should know what God and man is. And assuredly the converse proposition is equally true. If you know what God and man is, you ought to be able to say, without recourse to unthinkable symbolism, what the flower in the crannied wall is. The "dialectic" which would put us into full and complete possession of the truth about the constitution of the universe would also, as Plato pointed out, be the one science which could speak with unquestionable authority of the true nature of each particular thing, how insignificant soever (*Republic*, 534 B). Internal self-contradiction and disagreement with the general formal characteristics of experience would be alike impossible in a science based on metaphysics. If the concepts used by any science cannot without thorough-going modification stand the double test of self-consistency and agreement with the general characteristics of experience as a whole, then, however useful for practical purposes, the fundamental ideas and principles of that science are after all "working" hypotheses, and have none of the finality which we have a right to expect from a science of metaphysical origin.

We may easily illustrate the argument of the last paragraph by an appeal, for instance, to the position, with respect to finality, of our ordinary geometry. Suppose that our insight into the general conditions of experience enabled us to make either of the following propositions: (1) Whatever is experienced must necessarily come to us with attributes of a spatial kind, the nature of which is correctly represented by the Euclidean assumptions about space;[1] or, (2) The spatial form, as represented by Euclidean geometry, will be found to belong to all experiences which satisfy certain definitely known conditions[2]—then the geometry of Euclid would assume the rank of a philosophical science, and we should be in a position to say,

[1] By the "Euclidean assumptions" I mean those implied in the famous postulate about parallel straight lines, or, what I suppose is the same thing, in i. 32.

[2] *e.g.* all perceptions of sight and touch.

given certain accurately known conditions, the propositions of geometry are necessarily and without exception true of the real world. And, if we could feel perfectly satisfied with Kant's treatment of space as a form of intuition in the "Transcendental Æsthetic," we might almost be prepared to take this view of the relation of "Euclidean" space to the general scheme of the world. Any misgivings that might arise about the matter could only be due to the feeling that the Kantian dictum that space is the form of intuition belonging to the "outer sense" is too vague and obscure to amount of itself to such a distinct apprehension of the conditions upon which the spatial type of experience depends as we seem to require from a metaphysic of geometry.

But now suppose for a moment that there is—I do not say truth—but even intelligibility in the contentions of our modern "metageometers." Suppose that Euclid's space, with its fundamental axiom about parallels, is only one of several thinkable types of spatial construction, and that we do not possess enough knowledge about the whole scheme of things to be able to say that Euclidean space alone is real, or even that the space in which we live is in all its parts of the strictly Euclidean type. I do not, of course, affirm that the suggestions here brought forward are true or even well-founded; the question of their value is entirely one for the mathematician and the physicist. The important point for my purpose is simply that such ideas, be they as valuable as Professor Karl Pearson suggests or as useless as Stallo asserts, have been put forward by eminent mathematicians, and that, right or wrong, they appear, as far as a mere layman can judge, to have enough meaning to be capable of being discussed.

Consider the argument of the following sentences (*Common Sense of the Exact Sciences*, p. 222): "We assume that all our space is perfectly *same*, or that solid figures do not change their shape in passing from one position in it to another. . . . Supposing our observations to be correct, it by no means follows that because the portion of space of which we are cognisant is for all practical purposes same, that therefore *all* space is same. . . . On the like basis with this postulate as to the sameness of our space stands the further assumption that it is homaloidal (*i.e.* that its curvature is zero). . . . We may postulate that the portion of space

of which we are cognisant is practically homaloidal, but we have clearly no right to dogmatically extend this postulate to *all* space." Now if we admit the very possibility of discussing these suggestions, we are at once bound to concede that the doctrine about parallels which expresses the fundamental assumption of our ordinary geometry as to the constitution of the space in which we live is so far from being an intellectual necessity for all creatures possessed of an "outer sense," that it is —in the words of the author from whom I have just quoted— "a mere dogmatic extension to the unknown of a postulate which may perhaps be true for the space upon which we can experiment." This means that the most fundamental assumptions of our science are true only with restrictions and under conditions which we have no means of determining with accuracy, and that we simply do not know how far or with what modifications they would hold good for a completed experience. And this liability to modification to an unknown extent is, as we have already seen, the distinguishing mark of a merely "empirical" and non-metaphysical science. And hence writers like Professor Clifford, who admit the possibility of non-Euclidean space, are only logical in calling geometry a "physical" science.[1]

We may now pass from these generalities to the application of the principles which have guided us so far to the problem in which we are specially interested, the problem of the relation of ethics to metaphysics. We may state the alternative possibilities between which we have to choose in the most general way in the form of an antithesis, thus. If we can begin a study of the phenomena of conduct by such a definition of the concept "conduct" as will serve, not for provisional purposes merely, but with completeness and finality, to indicate where moral action begins and where it merges in something

[1] To the various possibilities about space enumerated in *Common Sense of the Exact Sciences*, *loc. cit.*, we may add another which the physicist has a right to disregard, though it ought to be taken into consideration by the metaphysician. Mr. Bradley, I believe, is the only writer who has clearly stated the point that, for all we know, there may be numerous spatial systems within the Universe, having no kind of spatial relation with one another. If this is so, even a proof that the curvature of *our* space in all its parts is zero would not warrant a dogmatic denial of the existence of non-human intelligences endowed with spatial experiences of a different kind. For these geometricians space with a finite curvature might be *real* space, and "flat" space with a zero curvature "imaginary." The assertion that even our own spatial experiences all form one single spatial system needs more examination than it has hitherto received.

higher, if we can produce a thoroughly coherent account of moral good and moral duty, if we can trace back all the varied phenomena of the moral life and the moral judgment to their source in a single self-consistent principle of action, if we can exhibit exactly the place the moral ideal and the moral way of looking at things would hold in an experience which took into account the whole contents of the world, and show how it would fuse into a harmonious whole with the apparently discordant ideals of science and of art, then we have a system of ethics based upon a genuine metaphysical knowledge of the ultimate character of reality as a whole. If we cannot do this, but are driven, in our attempts at systematising our moral judgments and preferences, to operate with concepts of a self-contradictory and merely "symbolic" kind, if our practical conclusions hold good only within limits and under restrictions which cannot be accurately assigned, if we cannot establish a finally consistent account of the ideals which we set before ourselves in our conduct and our ethical theory, then ethics is, like any physical branch of inquiry, a merely "empirical" or "natural" science, if indeed it can properly be called a science at all.

We may state the same antithesis in a more concrete form thus. If we can start in our theorising, from what Kant would call a purely "formal" conception of good or of duty, deducible from the mere general analysis of the notion of rational or self-determining activity, and from this concept deduce in turn laws of conduct applicable without restriction to all rational or self-determining agents as such, irrespective of the special peculiarities of their physical environment and animal nature, we can base ethics upon metaphysics, as Kant and his followers attempt to do. But if we are driven to begin our ethical reflections with a concept of good or duty based upon a comparative study of the empirically ascertained facts of human life and history, and if, for aught we know, this provisional concept of good or duty may be liable to be modified in the course of our researches by the discovery of new and pertinent social facts, if we have to recognise in these "facts" "material" circumstances not springing from the very nature of self-determining or rational personality as such, but from what are in the end purely animal impulses and instincts, of which we

do not know but that they may be otherwise in other parts of the universe, if our moral laws again would be liable to indefinite modification under different physical conditions and with altered animal instincts, then once more ethics is a purely empirical study, and its concepts and hypotheses, like those of all the so-called "empirical" sciences, are merely provisional, that is, they are only valid under conditions the totality of which is unknown. They are valid and binding for a self-determining personality possessed by the particular animal organisation and placed in the particular physical and social environment with which we are ourselves familiar, but it is impossible for us to say to what extent they would be applicable to the case of non-human personalities in some remote part of the universe, or even to future generations of human personalities, if the material conditions of existence upon our planet were to be seriously altered.

A final decision between these opposing views of the basis of ethical truth and its degree of validity can only be obtained by the full review of the considerations which we intend to urge in the following chapters; but we may, I think, at even this preliminary stage of our argument, with advantage point out the singular fragility of the assumptions to which the Kantian view (and a metaphysical theory of ethics means practically the Kantian view) stands committed. (1) If we are willing to go back to first principles, we may make our appeal to the character of the highest and most universal categories under which we can bring the facts of organic and psychical life in their totality. Avenarius, in his essay on "Philosophy as a Conception of the World in conformity with the Principle of least Action," and others [1] have very properly emphasised the value for philosophy of the so-called principle of economy. According to their view, the fundamental nature of human thought is best expressed by the statement that thinking is a labour-saving contrivance, by the aid of which we are able to classify our experiences at the cost of the least possible expenditure of energy. The same formula applies no less admirably to the whole body of our ethical feelings and judgments. The whole system of ethical sentiments and

[1] For a brief and lucid statement of the principle see also H. Cornelius, *Psychologie als Erfahrungs-wissenschaft*, pp. 85-87.

judgments by which the moral life of a community or a civilisation is ruled has, in fact, no other significance than this; it is a contrivance, primarily shaped like other contrivances of the kind, in consequence of the competition for survival between divergent types for bringing the particular reactions of an individual upon the stimuli supplied by his material and social environment into conformity with the permanent interests of the species to which he belongs, and of himself as a representative of his species and an instrument in its propagation. The supreme importance to the human race at large of a general ethical progress is due to the fact that the formation of moral habits and the sentiments to which they give birth promotes the regular execution, at a trifling cost in energy, of a beneficial reaction, which, apart from the moral habit, would only have been brought about sporadically after an infinity of less beneficial or even positively harmful reactions, and at the cost to the individual and the species of an untold expenditure of energy.[1]

In another connection it would be interesting to dwell more in detail upon the unique advantages of the conception of moral action here suggested as affording at one and the same time an estimate of the functions discharged by morality in the life of the civilised man or community, and an indication of the nature of the evolutionary process by which moral institutions and ideals have presumably been called into existence. For the present, however, our purpose is simply to show from such a description of the general character of moral action the utter inadequacy of any theory which professes to

[1] Lest the reader should think me unmindful of my own previous protest against loose and ambiguous use of the term "energy," I hasten to remark that the energy of which I am speaking may be understood throughout in a purely physiological sense as energy of muscular exertion, and is therefore strictly "calculable in terms of mass and velocity." It is possible that I may by an oversight be found using such terms as "energy" and "force" inexactly here and there in the course of this essay, but I do not think that any of my arguments will be found to turn upon the ambiguous use of these terms. Thus if by any chance I should be found referring in the course of my exposition to "psychical forces," I would ask the reader to understand by the phrase merely *processes* of a psychical kind; and to dismiss from his mind any notions of "activity" which the words may suggest. For an elaborate statement of the parallel between the evolution of organic types and the development of ethical and social systems, I may refer the reader to Professor Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*. For an interesting illustration of the way in which ethical sentiments can be originated by natural selection, see Westermarck's able discussion of the origin of the universal condemnation of incestuous unions.—*History of Human Marriage*, chap. xiv.

find a sufficient explanation of ethical facts in the bare concept of a "rational" or "self-determining" intelligence. To say that morality has its origin in the rational or self-determining character of human activity is indeed to say no more than that it is, in our own phraseology, a systematic device for saving labour to the human organism. For activity is self-determining just in so far as the agent's reactions against his environment cease to be determined for him from the outset by a few rigidly fixed typical forms of instinctive response to certain general classes of stimulus, and come to be adapted on each and every occasion to secure the particular result which, under the special circumstances of the case, is demanded by the permanent interests of the individual or of the species of which he is a representative member. I am, for instance, more truly a self-determining agent than a hemisphereless fish, because while the fish is so constituted that he cannot but snap at the bait that is dangled before his nose, even though he has but this moment been released from the hook that lies concealed behind it, I can put down the glass that I am raising to my lips and consider the probable effect of the indulgence upon my health, my work, and my reputation.

Again, when we speak of "rationality" as characteristic of the highest forms of psychical life, what we have in view is just this same thorough-going adaptation of the organism's ways of reacting upon its environment to the permanent interests of individual or species. When we contrast man as the possessor of a "capability and godlike reason" and "large discourse looking before and after" with the "beast that wants discourse of reason," the choice of the contrasted epithets shows that the "capability" we have in mind is just this same power, in virtue of memories of the past and anticipations of the future, to find the appropriate, as distinguished from the merely customary, the precisely, as distinguished from the merely vaguely appropriate, reaction. The reason which manifests itself in specifically human action is not, like the νοῦς of Aristotle, something mysterious that comes into the organism from without and manipulates it as a musician does his instrument; it is but another name for the thorough-going organisation of the organic reactions themselves in accord with

the principle of securing the beneficial course of behaviour with the least expenditure of energy.

If this is so, we can see at once why it is an insufficient explanation of the nature and origin of our moral ideals to say that they spring from the rational character of human agency. For "rationality" by itself is a mere empty form, and to say that moral action is rational action is tantamount to saying merely that it is action organised in accordance with the principle of economy.[1] But in order to know what kind of conduct will in the case of any individual or species conform to our principle by securing the beneficial reaction at the least cost, it is clearly all-important to know what are the general conditions of existence which have to be met by the action of the individual or species in question. Any serious difference in the initial conditions under which individual or species grows up is bound to make a correspondingly great difference in the type of action which, as conforming most nearly with the principle of economy, will establish itself in the end as the "rational" type of behaviour for that individual or species.

This means to say that any really fruitful inquiry after an ethical ideal or ethical principles must be based not merely on an analysis of the formal characteristics of moral action, but upon an examination of the actual circumstances of the material and social environment of the human race, or, in other words, that ethics must study man not merely as an intelligence, but as an animal dwelling on the surface of a particular planet under certain definite physical surroundings, and inheriting certain peculiar instincts, and as a member of a species having certain special ways of obtaining nourishment and of reproducing his kind. And it further means that all attempts to create a universal system of ethical principles, applicable not only to mankind but to all intelligent and self-determining agents, must be mere waste of time. For, if we once suppose the general physical basis of animal life to be seriously altered, it is impossible to say to what extent the types of sentiment and action which, under present conditions, approve themselves as life-preserving and beneficial to the individual and the species would be still in place.

[1] Just as "rational" thinking means thinking in the way which enables us to co-ordinate our experiences most economically, *i.e.* by the fewest and simplest hypotheses.

We have only to imagine a race of intelligent beings who could support themselves, like Shelley's "bright camelions," on air and dew, or whose methods of reproduction were asexual, to realise how completely the nature of the ethical ideal is conditioned by the concrete empirical facts of human history and the original data of animal appetite and instinct with which our race started on its development.[1] Thus a consideration of the general character of rational activity seems to warrant the conclusion that ethics, unless it is to consist of mere barren tautologies, must be based not on general principles of metaphysics, but upon the study of human nature in its concrete empirical entirety, as it reveals itself to the student of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Only from such an empirical study of human nature, as it actually is, can we deduce such a knowledge of human needs and aspirations as will enable us to give a definite answer to the questions, what type of life is the ideal and along what lines is progress to be made towards its realisation.

(2) We might have reached the same conclusion, even apart from the appeal to the principle of economy, by direct reflection upon the simple maxim, the practical validity of which we all acknowledge in our moral judgments upon men and actions, that "circumstances alter cases." To a large extent the truth of this proverbial statement is admitted even by those among us who are most anxious to base their ethics on the general notion of self-determining agency. Kant indeed stands almost alone among modern moralists—the only striking example of a similar attitude which occurs to me at this moment is that of Geulinx—in his refusal to allow any modification of ordinary rules of duty to meet exceptional cases. For the most part our opponents would be prepared to concede to us so much as this, that though it is always incumbent on you to do your duty, there are no hard and fast rules to show what your duty is; on that point you must be instructed by circumstances. For instance, in a time of anarchy or civil war or in a state of siege the ordinary rules of not taking the law into your own hands or of giving every accused person full opportunities for an impartial

[1] Or, without indulging in such fantastic imaginations, we may call to mind the curious influence of the material environment of a tribe in leading to such customs as polyandry and close intermarriage. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, chaps. xx.-xxii.

and public trial may have to curtsey to the necessities of the situation, and what would, under ordinary circumstances, be outrageous violence or even murder may become a moral duty dictated by self-preservation or by patriotism.

But the maxim that "circumstances alter cases" seems to me to contain more than is recognised by such admissions as these. I cannot but believe that the general feeling of men of intelligence and character would bear me out in saying that among the circumstances which alter cases are not only such external circumstances as those mentioned in the last sentence, but also the subjective tastes, likings, interests of the agent himself. To a Kantian, of course, the suggestion that my individual tastes and feelings may be among the circumstances which exercise a modifying influence on my duty will seem rank heresy; yet there are cases of conscience in which it seems impossible to reach a decision apart from such considerations of the purely subjective circumstances of the tastes, feelings, and interests of the individual who is called on to act.

Take, for example, a case that, if historians speak the truth, has more than once occurred in real life, the case of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. The question is, What would be the path of duty for a woman who was compelled to choose between losing her own chastity and sacrificing her brother's life? To such a question, as far as I can see, there can be no one universal answer; if one were consulted by a person placed in such a quandary the most one could say by way of advice would be: "You must judge for yourself which is most worth having, chastity or a brother. If you feel that to buy the life even of a brother at such a cost would be a degradation, then of course you must refuse to accept the terms offered you; if you feel that complaisance, in such a cause, would leave no degradation behind it, I at least cannot condemn you if you consent." Most women of high character and sensitive conscience would probably make Isabella's choice, but I cannot think that any really thoughtful man would be very confident in condemning one who had chosen the other alternative. It seems to be altogether a problem for the agent herself to decide, and to decide by reference to her own personal feelings. What might in one woman be an act of heroic self-sacrifice might in another be a cowardly desertion of duty. It is

altogether a question of the amount of degradation which a particular person would feel to be involved in compliance. To Isabella it seemed self-evident that our own soul is of more worth to us than our brother; to Fantine in *Les Misérables*, on the other hand, her child's well-being seemed of more importance than her own innocence, and which of us is prepared off-hand to say that either was wrong? Probably none of us would say that Isabella ought to have yielded to Angelo, and surely none of us would say that Fantine was called upon to let her baby starve.[1]

These are, of course, extreme cases, but something like the same conditions arise in all those cases where a public man is tempted to resort to quibbling, prevarication, or double-dealing from patriotic motives. Here again it seems impossible to answer the question, Is it ever right to deceive *pro bono publico?* without some reference to the personal feelings of the public man. Some men would feel that the falsehood, however necessary in the public interest, left on them an ineffaceable stain of personal pollution; to others it would appear to be selfish neglect of duty to sacrifice the interests of their country to their own personal dislike of lying. And here again, it seems impossible to say without qualification that either party would be right. If a man feels a lie to be such a violation of the moral order that he can in no case utter it without degradation, no doubt he ought not to tell the convenient lie, and perhaps one may add he would be wise not to aspire to a prominent position in political life; but on the other hand, if a second man feels that the interests of the country for which he acts are paramount, who is to say that he is wrong in serving those interests even at the cost of having sometimes to say that which is not?

I am not, of course, appealing to cases of this kind, in order to argue that a man is always justified in doing what, at the moment, he happens to like. It is not of mere momentary likes and dislikes, but of fixed and settled tastes and interests,

[1] Shakespeare seems to have felt that it is difficult to decide the moral problem unconditionally. At least he has taken care to strengthen our sympathy with Isabella by representing Claudio as a coward who stoops to urge his sister to purchase his life on Angelo's terms. One feels that in any case such a brother as Claudio was not worth the sacrifice, but I am not sure what our judgment would be if he had not known of the proposal, or known it only to reject it.

that I am speaking, and my contention is that it is the duty of a man who desires to inform his moral judgment to make a serious study, not only of the probable consequences of his actions to himself and others, but of his own interests and feelings. It is a part, though not the whole of morality, to know what it is that would satisfy you, and when you know what it is to see that you get it. And with difference in tastes and feelings goes difference in the acts and objects from which satisfaction may be derived. The only satisfactory rule for a man who wishes to act at once reasonably and conscientiously would be to take into account in making his decisions both the external circumstances and what he knows of his own tastes and disposition, and at the same time to pass his judgment on the evidence submitted with impartiality, *i.e.* just as if the tastes and likings which form a part of the facts to be considered were those of some neighbour whom he was called on to advise. The common precept, to put aside all questions of one's personal tastes in forming a conscientious judgment on the morality of a given course of action, is but a perverted form of this important rule of impartiality.

I have gone at some length into this question of the legitimate influence of the purely personal factor upon our moral judgments, because, as it seems to me, these considerations are of themselves enough to show that the selves or personalities of which a science of ethics has to take account are not the mere abstractions of idealist metaphysics, but fully concrete animal beings existing in a special environment and with special physiological and psychological peculiarities, all of which must exercise an incalculable influence upon the theory of conduct, though they are necessarily disregarded by a metaphysic which is bound to confine itself to a mere general study of the formal characteristics of experience. I may perhaps be allowed, before I leave the subject, to refer in passing to another set of ethical problems which seem to me to support the same contention even more forcibly. On what ground, I would ask, can a system of ethics which is based on the mere general concept of self-determining agency justify the exceptional severity with which the best moral judgment of all civilised communities has reprobated various forms of sexual perversity? It seems useless to appeal to the Kantian maxim of treating

humanity in the persons of others always as an end and never as a means, by way of explanation. For it is clear, *e.g.* from the history of Greek civilisation, that both parties to such a perverse relationship may make it an instrument of their own intellectual and even moral development as free personalities (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 256 C-E). Yet the ordinary moral judgment of civilised humanity would seem to regard even the most ideal relationship which can be developed upon a basis of perversity as infinitely more reprehensible than the least elevated relationships of the normal type. Kant's acquiescence in the judgment of ordinary morality on this point (see *Werke*, vii. 76, ed. Hartenstein) is easier to understand than to justify on his own principles.

The fact is that any serious discussion of sexual ethics, which aims at explaining the principles involved in our ordinary judgments of these matters, is bound to take into account the part played by reproduction and the impulses connected with it in the life of the species considered as one among other organic types, as well as in the mental development of the individual. Once more we find ourselves forced to the conclusion that no treatment of ethical problems can be adequate which is not based upon full recognition of the special peculiarities of our "phenomenal" or animal nature. Metaphysical ethics seem in the end to be summed up in the empty tautology, "Ethical conduct is doing what, under given conditions, is reasonable for *you*"; but if you want to know what the "reasonable" for you is, you have to take into consideration not only the fact that you are an intelligence, or a self-determining personality, but also the fact that your original impulses and instincts are such and such, and your physical and social environment such and such. In a word, you are thrown back upon a previous study of psychology and sociology—to say nothing of biology—and a wide examination of the concrete peculiarities of the particular society of which you are a member. Kant and Green, to mention no other names, have said many excellent things about, *e.g.*, sexual morality, but they have been obliged in their treatment of the topic to take into consideration a great deal more of the concrete facts of human life than is implied in the conception of man as a self-determining personality.

And it is permissible to suggest that any future study of ethical principles will have to go much further in the same direction. Philosophical analysis has investigated the general ethical concepts of self-determination, freedom, obedience to law, etc., so thoroughly that there seems to be little room left in this field for anything more than occasional criticism of formulæ. What is really wanted, if the study of ethics is to advance any further, is not fresh threshing of the old straw, but a serious and systematic investigation of the concrete facts about the ethical convictions of different communities and different classes within a single community. We should, for instance, be much better able to understand the ethical ideals and principles of our own civilisation if half the industry and acuteness which is all but thrown away on superfluous restatements of philosophical generalities could be devoted to the task of ascertaining what is the actual tone of opinion in the great professions upon the ethical problems which arise in the discharge of professional duties. For instance, what is the standard of truthfulness recognised in the clerical, or again in the legal and medical professions? What are the views of these professions about the obligations of professional loyalty? What is honesty, as actually understood by the great body of "honourable" business men? What are the ideals of diplomatic morality which may be found in the despatches in our blue-books? What are the current ideas of honourable conduct in sexual matters which are characteristic of the various classes of society, or of dwellers in towns and dwellers in the country? On what grounds will an average jury recommend a murderer to mercy? Such are, as it seems to me, the questions which it is most imperative upon us to answer if our ethical science is to give us a genuine insight into the character of the ideals of conduct which are really operative in human life, and the history of their development.[1]

If the line of argument which we have pursued so far is valid, it follows, then, that it is a complete mistake to found a system of ethics upon the results of a previous study of general metaphysics. Ethics has appeared to us as a study

[1] The late Professor Sidgwick's two essays on clerical morality in his recently published *Practical Ethics* were a step in the right direction. But he was principally concerned with deciding what *ought* to be the professional standards of morality. What I desiderate is some knowledge of what they *are*.

which has to deal with a subordinate section of the facts of experience, and to deal with them in all possible fulness of detail. That is as much as to say that ethics is, from our point of view, an empirical or natural study as much as physiology or psychology. But it does not follow from this that metaphysical philosophy and ethics have nothing to do with each other, or that there is no such thing as a "Metaphysic of Ethics." I may conclude this chapter by briefly indicating what I believe to be the real nature of the relation between the two branches of study. Ethics, like any other science, affords material for both the critical and the constructive work of the metaphysician. For it has, of course, like other sciences, its own special categories and its own peculiar way of looking at the facts of the world, and we naturally want to know whether these ethical concepts give us the truth about things pure and unmixed, or whether they contain contradictions which would have to be removed before our account of experience would satisfy the conditions which as metaphysicians we demand of a completely truthful account. We want to know, for instance, whether it would be ultimately consistent with all the facts of experience to regard the world as an ethical system of self-determining personalities or spirits, or whether there are facts of experience neglected by ethics but studied by other sciences which refuse to be harmonised with such a conception of the ultimate reality. Again, we want to know whether the concepts of the ethical ideal and of moral progress which we use in ethics are themselves really intelligible and self-consistent, or contain merely "symbolical" and self-contradictory elements. Thus it is the duty of the metaphysician as a critic to bring the ethical concepts and the ethical way of representing the facts of the world to the test by comparing them with the metaphysical ideal of a complete and "pure" experience, and so to decide whether they are an adequate representation of the general character of the whole facts, or an imperfect and provisional way of representing a part of the facts in abstraction from the rest.

For constructive metaphysics ethics is again of the highest importance, as furnishing the details about one very striking side of the experience, the general characteristics of which the metaphysician seeks to determine. It is manifest that the

general character of a reality in which our ethical experiences, our struggles and aspirations and ideals, form an aspect must be very different from that of a reality from which all these experiences were absent, and which, so far as we could tell, contained nothing but such aspects of fact as are taken into account by the physical sciences. Like all sciences which deal with special aspects of reality, ethics does in an imperfect way tell us something about reality as a whole. Even if it is impossible for us to say positively what place human aspirations hold in the scheme of things, or how they would be represented in an experience which had the whole scheme for its contents, we can at least pronounce with safety that no theory of the ultimate character of the world can be adequate which ignores their existence and attempts to apply to the whole concrete reality of the universe categories derived solely from a consideration of that aspect of experience which is dealt with in abstraction by the physical sciences. Whatever may be the real nature of the "Absolute," the necessity of finding room within it for the facts of ethics and religion should make it abundantly clear that it is not completely expressed by such merely physical categories as "mass," "velocity," and "acceleration." There is, therefore, from our point of view, plenty of good and useful work to be done by a "Metaphysic of Ethics." Our complaint against the metaphysical moralists is simply this, that they invert the real order of dependence between the two branches of inquiry, and make the "Metaphysic of Ethics" the beginning, instead of the end, of an examination of morals.

CHAPTER II

SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A METAPHYSICAL ETHIC CONSIDERED

> Illud in his rebus nequaquam sumere possis,
> Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit.
>
> LUCRETIUS.

OUR last chapter will already have given the reader a general idea of the line of argument which we intend to pursue in the course of this essay. The chapters which are to follow the present will prove to be little more than the development in detail of the contentions of our last paragraph. But before we proceed to this more elaborate examination of the concrete facts of the moral life, we shall do well to devote a few pages to the consideration, and if possible the refutation, of some of the more common and plausible arguments which have been adduced to show that ethics, unlike the "natural" sciences, cannot be intelligently studied except in dependence upon a previously established system of metaphysical first principles. We must not disguise from ourselves the fact that in recent years much of the best philosophical opinion, in England at least, has been ranged on the side of the doctrine against which the polemic of the last few pages was directed, and in particular that the philosopher who has done more than any English writer since Butler to create an interest in the study of the ethical life has in the earlier chapters of his *Prolegomena to Ethics* offered something like a formal proof of the impossibility of a "natural," that is, a non-metaphysical, theory of morals. So long, then, as we have not examined, and, to the best of our ability, met some of the principal arguments by which the position of our opponents is

supported, the reader may be excused if he cherishes a suspicion that the contentions of our opening chapter, however plausible they may sound, must be after all either inconclusive or irrelevant. If Professor Green and other writers on ethics have really succeeded in showing the necessary dependence of ethics upon metaphysics, all that we have said hitherto is likely to produce no more conviction than the scholastic arguments against the possibility of motion leave upon an auditor conscious of his own ability to walk away from the sophist's lecture-room.

Thus we are driven in spite of ourselves to postpone the more constructive part of our inquiry yet a little longer, and to embark once more upon a chapter of philosophical polemics. The task is an ungracious and an irksome one to writer no less than to reader, but in sheer self-defence it must be taken up, if we do not wish to be put to silence by an appeal of the *e pur si muove* kind. Philosophical inquiry is still, unfortunately, too much like backwoods exploration in this, that your hatchet has to clear a way for you through the stately growths of a primitive forest before you can use it for squaring the logs for your own little cabin. Well for us if the log-hut of our own fashioning does not prove less weather-proof as well as less imposing than the congeries of giant-growths among which we propose to make our clearing. We will take, then, as typical arguments of the kind we wish to meet (1) the conviction common to moralists of very different schools that ethics is essentially differentiated from all forms of natural science by the sole fact that it teaches us what *ought* to be, not what *is*, and (2) what is really a specially elaborated form of this same general conviction—the arguments of the Kantian moralists as set forth, with special reference to English "evolutionary" ethics, in Green's *Prolegomena*.

(1) And first let us begin with some consideration of the general principle at stake. The "natural" sciences, we have frequently been told, aim only at the ascertainment of facts; they are content to answer to the best of their ability the question, What does the world actually contain? Hence they can be pursued quite satisfactorily by ordinary empirical methods of observation and experiment, and need employ none but "provisional" or "working" concepts. For the ascertain-

ment of facts, it will now be generally admitted, we need no *a priori* axioms of unquestioned validity, no concepts whose non-empirical origin places them beyond criticism. So long as our scientific concepts and hypotheses enable us to group the facts of nature in a way which is at once consistent with the present state of our knowledge and helpful towards the discovery of fresh facts, their relative validity is for the time guaranteed by their usefulness, and we need not scruple to employ them or to assert their relative truth because of the probability that the fresh facts which they enable us to discover will eventually lead to modifications in them.

But with ethics, according to a wide-spread conviction, the case is radically different, because the scientific problem is different. Ethics, it is said, is a "normative" science, a science not of facts but of ideals. It tells us not what *is*, but what *ought* to be, and, in an ideal society, *would* be. And you cannot learn what ought to be by observation of or experiment upon the empirical course of events in a morally defective world like our own, where what ought to be is most commonly just what does *not* exist. A "naturalistic" or "empirical" theory of conduct—so it is maintained—would at best teach us what men have done or are likely to do, not what they ought to do. Ethics, then, in virtue of its "normative" character, contains some non-empirical element of immediate intuition or a *priori* axiom of unquestionable authority and more than transitory or provisional validity. And for this very reason its precepts, unlike the conclusions of the sciences of facts, are absolute and final, and beyond all danger of modification by metaphysical criticism. They are valid not for this or that person or in this or that situation, but, as the ecclesiastical catchword has it, *semper, ubique, omnibus.* We can afford to be content with an imperfect and provisional account of what *is*, and to rest in the hope that its imperfections will be lessened by the researches of our children and children's children, but how should we reconcile ourselves to a merely tentative and provisional account of the good we desire to seek and the duty we ought to discharge? Here, if anywhere, we must demand unerring insight and finality of statement. If fiction should prove to be mingled with truth in our attempts at a final theory of moral principles, on what, then, can we rely as truth by which to

live? If the foundations be dissolved, what are the righteous to do?

The full consideration of the line of thought thus suggested cannot be undertaken in a preliminary chapter like the present. We shall at a later stage of our argument be able to say better than we can now what is the peculiar character of moral obligation, and how far it is correct to regard ethics as primarily a science of obligations. At present we will deal not with specifically moral obligation, but with the general concept of obligation in the widest sense, and we will ask the double question: (1) What is meant by the opposition of what ought to be to what is? (2) Is this opposition peculiar to ethics?

The answer to one question at once furnishes an answer to the other. In itself the distinction between what ought to be and what is is not confined to the sphere of moral science, as may easily be seen by an appeal to the current language of unprejudiced thought. Logic also, we are often told by our pupils, in contradistinction to psychology, deals with the ways in which we "ought" to reason, not the ways in which we too often do actually reason. The science of æsthetics has much to say as to the way in which certain perceived contents "ought" to affect the emotional side of our nature. Take arithmetic again; you may often hear the school-boy say, "I know this sum "ought" to come out, but I can't get it to do so." So again the medical man may say, "There ought to be altered light-reflexes," or knee-jerks or heaven knows what, "along with the symptoms of this patient, but hitherto I have failed to find them."

Thus, in a sense, we may say all science, in so far as it is real science, is concerned with what ought to be. All science, that is, aims at setting up types of uniformities with which our experience of facts should conform so far as it realises the conditions of a "pure" experience, *i.e.* comprehensiveness and consistency within the limits prescribed by the initial assumptions of the science in question. If, within these limits, we find our experience of particular processes failing to conform with these pre-established types or scientific laws, we are thrown back on one of two suppositions. Either the experiences embodied in our typical generalisations were not themselves "pure" experiences, or the apparently contradictory facts have

not been correctly described; either in the supposed "law" or in the supposed exception there must be an omission of relevant or an insertion of irrelevant circumstances which would have to be remedied before our account could become a really adequate account of experienced reality in terms which should be themselves possible contents of experience. Wherever this discrepancy occurs between our own accounts of our experience and the conditions of a "pure" and consistent experience, so far as we know them or assume them, we have what is, in principle, the familiar divergence between what *is* and what *ought to be*. If we do not always behave as we ought, or as the ideally virtuous man would, neither do we always reason as we ought, or as the ideal sage would, nor yet do we always approve that painting, poem, or melody which we ought, or which the man of perfect taste would. In this respect ethics does not differ essentially from logic or æsthetics, nor these again from the other sciences. If ethics tells us how we ought to act, and æsthetics what we ought to admire, and logic how we ought to reason, histology, for instance, tells us what we ought to see under the microscope. The only distinction that we can draw between sciences of facts and sciences of norms seems to be one of degree. There are three sciences which may perhaps claim more of the "normative" character than the rest, just because their range is wider and their "norms" therefore of more general applicability. As opposed to other sciences of a more restricted scope, logic, ethics, and æsthetics may fairly claim to cover between them the whole range of the three great divisions of intellectual activity, the speculative, the practical, the creative. And thus each may fairly claim to tell us what results we ought to get under conditions so general as to be *comparatively* unhypothetical. The "norms" of logic are for this reason more universal than those of mathematics, those of ethics than those of economics. As between these three peculiarly "normative" sciences themselves, however, the highest place in respect of "normative" character must be assigned, not to ethics, but to logic. For the norms of ethics can only be applied after all to a small portion of the experienced facts of the world's history. To the inanimate world they have no application at all, to the animate but non-human world only a doubtful application, and

even in the world of human feeling and action there are whole aspects which seem independent of them. There would be no sense in asking whether our current ethical predicates can be asserted of the behaviour of a cyclone; it would be easier to ask than to answer the question how far any of them can be predicated of the conduct of a black beetle or an angel; and even within the limits of distinctively human intelligence it is by no means clear that they can characterise in more than a very superficial way the activity of the artist and the student. The norms of logic, on the other hand, are applicable to any and every system of experience-contents just in so far as it is a system at all, in other words, to the whole universe of reality considered as an ordered whole, or to any subordinate set of aspects within that whole which cohere closely enough together to be treated for any theoretical or practical purposes as a single connected system. There are many sides of existence that may be treated for all practical purposes as independent of the laws of morality; there are none which are independent of the law of contradiction. If there is any science which, from its authoritative and normative character, is incapable of being founded upon empirical observation and analysis of what *is*, logic is that science; and conversely, if it is possible by an examination of the reasoning processes as they are actually employed in daily life and in the various branches of science, or by an inquiry into the character and amount of evidence which is actually treated by the various sciences, as well as in affairs of everyday life, as equivalent to proof, to create a scientific logic, in other words a general theory of the conditions of valid inference and the ideal of scientific demonstration, much more should it be possible by the ordinary methods of scientific inquiry into facts, *i.e.* in this case by an examination of the various moral ideals and institutions which have actually flourished in civilised human communities, to create a scientific ethical theory of the general nature of moral action and the general conditions of moral progress. The success of the inductive logician is the best guarantee for the success of the inductive moralist.

These considerations lead at once to a second point of the highest importance. If all sciences, in some sense or another, deal with what ought to be, no science can say what *ought to be*

except in dependence on a previous investigation into what *is*. It is not only in ethics that it holds good to say that a "categorical obligation" is a contradiction in terms. What ought to be, in all departments of inquiry, means what is demanded in order to make our accounts of experience consistent with what is assumed to be known of its general formal characteristics. If we want to know how we "ought" to make our inferences, either in general or in any special branch of science, we must first learn what are the systematic conditions under which our inferences have to be made. If we wish to know how much evidence or what kind of evidence amounts to proof in a given science, we must first of all begin by ascertaining what are the leading pecularities of the subject-matter which we have to observe or upon which we propose to experiment. If we would know how we ought to handle a certain subject, as sculptors, say, or as musicians, we must make a study of the physical properties of the various materials in which the statue may be executed, or the peculiar scales of the instruments upon which the overture or symphony is to be performed. The way in which an idea ought to be carried out in marble and the way in which it ought to be carried out in metal will not be exactly identical, and the orchestration of a composition will need to be different according as it is intended for performance by a band largely composed of brass instruments or for one in which the brass instruments are few and the "wood-wind" and "strings" predominant. So if we would know what in the narrower ethical sense we ought to do, to know what we ought to do—even Kant cannot escape from this necessity—we must begin by knowing *what* we *are*, what is the general character of the system of nature in which human activities play a part, and what are the general conditions under which that part has to be played.

Further, if we are asking not merely for a vague general description of human well-being in the abstract, but for a more definite and particular account of the path of happiness or the path of duty for our individual selves, we shall need to know, as conditions of the problem to be solved, the general character of the special civilisation of which we form a part, of the social institutions of which we can avail ourselves, and the social prejudices with which we may be brought into

conflict. There is, in short, no single element, whether in the general physical environment of the human species or of some sub-variety of it, or in the special social environment of a particular individual or body of individuals, the neglect of which may not vitiate our inferences as to duty or happiness. In principle we cannot refuse our assent to Plato's conviction that, *ceteris paribus*, the man whose scientific training has taught him most about the constitution of the world-system and man's place in it will also be of all men the best fitted to say what is good for men and therefore the best fitted to rule. For us too the "dialectic" art in its final perfection must be identical with the art of kingship. When the Philippian jailor—to take a familiar example—cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas naturally replied with a recital of the cardinal *facts* of the divine economy—"They spoke to him the word of the Lord." To attempt the discovery of what we ought to do apart from a previous study of the actual facts of our position is like trying to solve a chess-problem without knowing the moves of the pieces or the laws of the game.

Thus it is no base counsel of expediency that says "no unconditional obligations." The doctrine of the formal or categorical imperative, carried out to its logical issue, could only lead to one of two alternatives, both disastrous. Either it must issue in that glorification of purposeless drudgery which certain among us have baptized the "Gospel of Work," or it must leave us in an antinomianism in which all and sundry caprices of the individual, unembarrassed by any serious attempt to understand the necessities and responsibilities of his position, would reign supreme. It is hardly necessary for me to remind the reader that experience is constantly showing how scientific discoveries and hypotheses, such as the Darwinian theory of natural selection, which seem at first sight to be concerned entirely with the facts of our racial history, and not in the least with our moral obligations, exercise as a matter of fact the most far-reaching and revolutionising influence on our conceptions of duty. The researches of Darwin were one and all concerned not with what ought to be, but with what *is*; yet we may fairly ask whether there is a single moral question of any magnitude which intelligent and educated men would answer to-day in precisely the same fashion as they would

have done before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species.*

Perhaps I may be allowed a still more striking illustration. The central doctrines of the Christian religion are obviously statements on alleged matters of fact, assertion as to what *is.* Whether or not the second person of the Trinity came down from heaven and took flesh in the womb of the Virgin; whether or not there is a life after death and a judgment to come in which our doom will be decided by our attitude to the doctrines and rites of the Church—all these and similar questions have to do not with what ought to be, but with what *is;* yet it is surely manifest that our conceptions as to what we ought to do must be vastly different according as we accept or reject the teachings of current orthodoxy about these matters of fact. Fasting communion, for instance, which to the unbeliever is no more than a somewhat puerile ceremonial observance, may reasonably be regarded by the believer in certain versions of these alleged matters of fact as a very solemn duty, which it would be the height of folly and criminality to neglect. Or, to take a more palpable case of extreme divergence of view, what, to the man who rejects Catholic orthodoxy, can be less justifiable than the rule which is—I believe—recommended by some casuists of the Roman Church, that in cases of difficult and dangerous child-birth, the life of the mother should always be sacrificed if need be for the chance of securing the life of the child? Yet what, on the other hand, more reasonable, if the Catholic theory of life be a true one, than that the baptized Christian, whose hopes of salvation are at least an appreciable quantity, should be suffered to die in preference to the unbaptized infant, of whose chances in the world to come nothing is known? In a case like this it is clear that what may to one man appear little better than murder, may, with equally good *prima facie* reason, appear to another a plain and inevitable duty, and the only sure way of deciding between the two opposing views as to what ought to be done by the physician or the midwife is to begin by first deciding between the two opposing theories as to the value and efficacy of the sacraments. The cruel practical dilemma just indicated cannot possibly be met by an appeal to primitive moral intuitions or to abstract and formal maxims of right conduct. The only way in which

the problem can be solved is by an inquiry based upon our empirical scientific knowledge of the system of the universe, into the actual facts of our position as human beings. Similarly, if such a theory of existence as is professed by Victor Hugo's Torquemada were a true account of what *is*, it would clearly be a moral duty to burn heretics. These remarks may serve to illustrate the close interdependence of the two questions, What are the facts about the world? and, What ought I to do? Of the peculiar features of moral, as distinct from all other obligations, we shall speak later.

We may turn, however, to less general considerations. In the writings of Professor Green and his followers, who may perhaps be still called the dominant school of moralists in this country, the force of such arguments as we have just brought forward is so far recognised that the theory of moral action is allowed to rest upon an analysis of our position in the universe so far at any rate as this; their ethics depend nominally upon the metaphysical analysis by which the existence of an "eternal self" as the subject of rights and duties is established. Green holds, moreover, (*a*) that, apart from this metaphysical analysis, no theory of moral obligation is possible, and he consequently systematically depreciates the value of the ethical writings of such men as Shaftesbury and Butler, who set themselves to fight the battle of a disinterested social morality without this particular metaphysical weapon; (*b*) that upon this analysis, without any further basis in psychology, a satisfactory theory of ethics can be erected. On both these positions, as we find ourselves compelled to dissent from both, it will be necessary to make some criticisms. I trust it is hardly necessary to say that any such criticisms as I may proceed to make have reference exclusively to the peculiar metaphysical basis of Professor Green's ethical theory, and in no way affect the truly extraordinary value of the brilliant picture given in the two latter books of the *Prolegomena* of the concrete characteristics and the growth of the moral ideals of Christian civilisation. It would indeed, as I conceive, be a real service to the memory of a good man and illustrious moral philosopher, to dissever the admirable account of moral ideals and progress which constitutes Green's real contribution to ethics from the singularly fragile metaphysical

assumption and the frequently unsound psychological polemic against Hedonism by which it is encumbered both in his own writings and to various degrees in those of many of his best-known followers. I shall be successful in at least one of the objects of this essay if the course of our discussion shows that it is possible to accept such an account as Green's of moral ideals and progress, at any rate in its main outlines, without believing in the metaphysics of the "eternal self" or in the crudities of an extreme anti-Hedonist psychology.

To proceed with our examination. As to (*a*) Green makes it a reproach against evolutionary theories of ethics that (p. 9) "it has generally been expected of a moralist that he should explain not only how men do act, but how they should act," whereas, according to him, "it is obvious that to a being who is simply a result of natural forces, an injunction to conform to their laws is unmeaning," etc. This, however "obvious," seems very inconclusive reasoning. However we suppose man to have come by his aspirations, towards a state better than that in which he finds himself, the fact remains that he has such aspirations, and that the most "empirical" and least metaphysical account of the actual condition of human nature is bound to take cognisance of their existence. It is surely not inconsistent with the evolutionist's belief that these aspirations have grown from a simpler, and as we say an "animal" beginning, to say, if, as from my observation of human nature I am led to assume, you have such and such ideals and aspirations, then such and such a line of conduct will lead to the realisation of your aims, such and such another line will not. So, of course, again with the various forms of logical inference. Is there any reason why an evolutionary anthropologist, simply because he believes the human mind, and along with it its logical forms and categories, to be a development from more rudimentary beginnings, should in consistency discard the "preceptive" parts of logic? And if the recognition that human intelligence is an instrument which has been gradually fashioned in the course of evolution from beast-like origins does not forbid the logician to tell us how we ought to reason and what evidence ought to win our assent if we would be true to our ideals of explanation, why should a similar recognition that our ethical ideals have a

history going back to a prehuman ancestry prevent the evolutionary moralist from telling us how we ought to act if we wish to realise those ideals in practice? The primary question for ethics is after all not how we came by our ideals, but what they are.

But, you say, the nature of those ideals, as we find them indicated in the ethical theorising and moral practice of cultivated communities, shows that they cannot have had an animal origin. For the purpose of argument we may for the moment agree to let this assertion pass unchallenged. Yet the fact still remains that metaphysical moral theories begin at the wrong end. Your contention may amply justify the creation of a metaphysic of ethics, but such a metaphysic ought not to precede but to follow upon a detailed and unbiassed investigation into the concrete character of the ideals operative in civilised society, just as *Naturphilosophie* and epistemology follow upon the inquiries of the physical sciences. If the character of human ideals, as revealed in the moral practice and the moral judgments of individuals and societies, is such as to compel us to admit the presence in man of a principle which is not a product of "natural forces," the fact is of the highest importance for metaphysical and psychological theory, but why should it preclude a perfectly independent and impartial investigation of the various ethical ideals themselves? It is, no doubt, a striking fact that we habitually form judgments of worth, but why should it be indispensably necessary to prefix a theory of the metaphysical implications of worth to the attempt to discover what the things are to which mankind have at various times attributed worth?

So again with Green's favourite argument from the existence of moral progress or the desire for it.[1] Progress, he argues, means passing from an initial state to a better state, and you can only judge one state better than another by comparing both with an ideal best. Hence all conscious moral progress is possible only on the condition that the person making the advance has from the very first been determined to action by the more or less shadowy concept of the possible best. And, though this is not explicitly stated, for a similar reason it would follow than any attempt on the

[1] Cf. *Proleg. to Ethics*, p. 180

part of the student of human conduct to trace the direction of moral progress in the history of a particular community or of humanity at large must be preceded by a theory of the nature of that "best" which is, according to this view, implicitly present to consciousness wherever there is an advance from worse to better. Hence, if this doctrine be true, the necessity for opening the discussion of ethics with a body of metaphysical prolegomena. You must, in outline at least, know the *best* toward which humanity is gravitating before you can compare one type of life or one form of society with another and say, "This is better than that." Such is the theory, expressed or implicit, which is responsible for the arrangement and method of the *Prolegomena to Ethics.*

But this theory, however plausible it may seem on a first reading, surely proves on examination to be nothing more than a very palpable example of the fallacy which has in modern years been peculiarly associated with the profession of psychologist. The whole argument turns upon a confusion of that which is or would be before the mind of a philosopher reviewing a completed theory of ethics with that which is before the mind of the ordinary moral man engaged in the performance of his duty, or the ordinary moralist engaged in the elaboration of an as yet incomplete moral theory. Of course the concept of a "better" logically involves at least an attempt to conceive a "best," just as the possibility of producing a straight line through a finite distance from any point in space logically involves the possibility of producing the same line *ad indefinitum*, but it no more follows from this that you cannot, as a matter of fact, think of a "better" without previously introducing the standard of an imagined "best," than it follows that I cannot produce a straight line for a distance of an inch without previously producing it *ad indefinitum* in the same direction. Indeed, until we have made some considerable advance in our acquaintance with the actual features of moral progress, we are not in a position to say whether a moral "best" is conceivable without contradiction; for all that we can infer from the mere consideration that "every better implies a best," moral perfection, the ethically best state, may be as ultimately self-contradictory a concept as the square root of a negative quantity or the last point of space.

The real order of thought on these subjects is, in fact, the very reverse of that supposed by Professor Green. As experience of our own everyday conduct, when we are not in our studies reflecting on problems of philosophy, should convince us, we are not ordinarily haunted in our conscientious and consciously ethical actions by the idea of an ultimate "best"; but we start simply with the choice between a number of alternatives, one of which presents itself as "good" by comparison with the rest, or "better" than they; the notion of a state of character or course of action which is so good as to be absolutely "best" is after all familiar only to the philosophic and reflective few, and to them it comes not as the presupposition of all recognition of a "better," but as a logical—or illogical—extension of the previously familiar concept of "better."[1] In fact, the notion of a morally best stands to the notion of a better exactly as that of a first cause to that of an immediate or proximate cause. In both cases what may seem to stand logically first comes as a matter of psychical history last into our thoughts, and equally in both cases the value of the concept is problematical until it has been subject to searching metaphysical and epistemological criticism.

What is true of the psychology of moral action is no less true if applied to the methods of moral science. It is not true even that the scientific student of conduct needs to base his theories as to the nature and direction of moral progress upon a preconceived theory as to the nature of the moral ideal. It seems, indeed, a natural criticism upon an empirical method in ethics to say that, apart from a theory of the ultimate moral ideal, you can neither assert nor deny that moral progress has taken place in the world without committing a *petitio principii*, but further consideration should show that the criticism is as baseless as it is natural. The necessary and sufficient basis for an investigation into the nature and direction of moral progress is to be found in the empirical fact that, according to the general conviction of mankind, successive civilisations have made moral advance, as compared

[1] Green's own statements about the real existence of a "best" state (*e.g. Proleg. to Ethics*, pp. 180 ff.) certainly seem open to the criticism passed by Hobbes on the similar theories of some of the ancients: "There is no such *Finis Ultimus* (utmost aim) nor *Summum Bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers" (*Leviathan*, xi).

with one another, and that in more or less definitely assignable departments. What the student of morals has to go upon in his inquiry into moral ideals and moral progress is not a previously existing theory of the ultimate good, but a mass of empirical judgments embodying the ethical convictions of society at large as to the directions in which progress is being made. Such judgments are, for instance, the statements that modern civilisation, as compared with ancient, shows an advance in its conceptions of the rights and duties of women, or that the English society of the nineteenth century is morally in advance of that of a hundred years ago, in virtue of its greater sobriety or its keener sense of the responsibilities of the wealthy. It is only by an examination of judgments like these, which convey the actual ethical sentiments of a given society, that it is possible to discover what are the general characteristics of actual ethical advance.

There are, of course, cases in which the moral philosopher is bound to condemn what appears to society around him an advance in morality as a retrograde step: what seemed to the public advance in humanity may to the keener insight of the student stand revealed as mere sentimentalism; what was acclaimed by the public as increase in delicacy and modesty may have to be gibbeted as mere growth in prudish insincerity. Yet in the end the only material we possess from which to frame a theory of moral progress is the general body of popular convictions about moral progress, and all that moral philosophy can legitimately do for us is to analyse these judgments and lay bare any identical principles which can be detected in them, rejecting as illusory those popular judgments which, when examined, run counter to these general principles. Self-consistency is, with popular judgments on ethical matters, as we have found it to be elsewhere, the only final test of truth.

As for a complete theory of the "best" or ultimate moral ideal, it is not until we have gained by the method just described considerable insight into the nature of such moral progress as is actually felt by each succeeding age to exist in the world that we are in a position to think of raising the question, What would be the characteristics of a society in which the various developments which existing ethical sentiment accepts as progressive had reached their goal? and even

when we have raised the question we must still wait, as I have already said, for metaphysical criticism to show whether such a perfect society can be thought of without contradiction. It will be the aim of later chapters of this essay to show that there is a radical and incurable doubleness of character about the moral ideal which makes it incapable of final realisation in any "best" condition, whether of individual or of society. The conscious duplicity of the hypocrite we shall find to be but the natural exaggeration of the unconscious duplicity which resides in the very heart of morality. Not to anticipate our future discussions, however, we may content ourselves for the present with reiterating our contention, for which we think the preceding sentences have afforded sufficient justification, that the study as well as the practice of ethics begins with the recognition of an "empirical" better, not with the creation of a metaphysical "best." To admit this contention is indeed to surrender unconditionally the whole argument against the possibility of a purely "empirical" theory of morals. If this point has been proved to the satisfaction of the reader, then in principle we may fairly claim to have won on the whole case. Still, rather than lie under the imputation of leaving any part of the contrary argument unanswered, as far as our very moderate ability goes, we will crave the reader's indulgence for a few further considerations upon the reasoning of the opening pages of the *Prolegomena to Ethics.*

In order to emphasise as strongly as possible our sense of the mischief which is done to ethics by making it dependent upon a peculiar metaphysical theory, we will state in the plainest language at our command two propositions which we think will be inevitably forced upon us by an examination of some of Green's metaphysical assumptions. These two propositions are: (1) There is no such thing as the Eternal Self, in Green's sense of the term; (2) If there were such a thing as the Eternal Self, it would be of no value for the purposes of the student of ethics. I now proceed to give my reasons for advancing these rather sweeping assertions.

(1) *There is no such thing as the Eternal Self.* In saying this I do not mean to contend that the arguments of chapter i. of the *Prolegomena to Ethics* prove nothing at all. Something they do prove, and we may in the course of our argument see

what that something is, but they do not prove what Professor Green sets out to prove, and subsequently assumes that he has proved. What Green intended to prove was, of course, that the individual consciousness of each of us, on one side at least, is something which is not a result of "natural forces," has not had a beginning in time nor in history, and consequently cannot be adequately described by the methods of "natural" or "empirical" science. Now it must be noted that from the very first Green states the problem in a way which, however conclusive against the crude materialism of the physicists who sometimes dogmatise about psychology without sufficient training in the science to understand the psychological point of view, is distinctly inapplicable to a genuine psychological empiricism. In his introductory account of the empirical position in psychology and ethics, he appears to make the following untenable assumptions: (1) there is no alternative between basing ethics upon metaphysics and attempting to base a theory of human conduct on loose general observation of the facts of animal life at large; (2) and these facts, so he apparently assumes, are physical, or, in other words, can ultimately be adequately expressed in terms of mass, velocity, and acceleration, so that the empiricist's position becomes one of attempting to trace psychical facts back to physical causes.[1] But neither of these assumptions seems necessary to the empirical position. As to (1), why may we not, while availing ourselves of such illustrations and analogies as we can safely draw from the infra-human world, base our ethics in the main on the observed facts of specifically *human* life? Ethics would then be indebted to natural history only in the same way in which scientific psychology is not infrequently indebted to animal psychology for hints confirming its independently obtained results.

The difficulty, in Green's mind, appears to be this, that if human and animal mental life are continuous, and human ethical sentiments have arisen by a continuous evolution from infra-human beginnings, as the evolutionary empiricist assumes, the sense of obligation must be explained as arising out of

[1] The wording here is mine, but it is clearly what is in Green's mind, as is shown by the emphasis laid on the "physical" nature of the empiricist's facts throughout this part of the *Proleg.* I carefully avoid introducing the terms "matter" and "motion," for reasons which seem too obvious to need explanation.

mere experiences of pain and pleasure. The consequence, however, scarcely seems to follow so necessarily as Green supposes. Among the higher animals, at least, it seems more reasonable to hold that animal experience, in proportion as it approaches our own, is made up of more than *mere* pleasures and pains. Are not the rudiments of the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation to be found among the higher animals, especially where the conditions of life are such that the animal can make its sentiments take effect upon its fellows ?[1] If so, the course of mental evolution would after all not be one of mere growth in knowledge about the conditions of pleasure and pain. And if it should be said that the experiences of the lowest forms of animal life at any rate cannot contain much more than pleasures and pains, the retort lies ready to hand that the vague organic experiences which we may roughly call the pleasures and pains of the *Infusoria* are not the pleasures and pains the psychologist is contemplating when he denies that the sense of obligation can be a derivative from pleasure-pain experiences. These vague organic experiences are at least as closely akin on their sensational or cognitive side to our more differentiated perceptions as they are on their affective or emotional side to such pleasures and pains as are under discussion in the controversy about Hedonism. They are at once more and less than these Hedonic experiences—less inasmuch as they lack the conscious reference to self involved in an enjoyment pursued as such, more inasmuch as they contain a cognitive as well as an affective element. To affirm that the sense of obligation may possibly have been derived from such beginnings as these is not therefore equivalent to deriving it from the selfish calculation of future pleasures and pains, and the derivation need not be regarded as *prima facie* impossible by any one, except those who are prepared to maintain that the feeling of obligation is demonstrably primitive and absolutely underived.

[1] The question will hardly be answered in the negative with any confidence by those who have seen a cat punish her kitten for uncleanliness. The following account of chastisement as inflicted by a savage father shows us an expression of disapprobation which affords an exact parallel to the boxing of a kitten's ears. "I shall not pass over in silence the correction a father gave one of his children for having thrown a stone at the back of another younger than himself ; it was merely a light slap upon the shoulder, which made him shed tears, and prevented him doing so again" (La Billardière, quoted in H. Ling Roth, *The Tasmanians*, p. 127).

(2) Even if we granted Green's contention about the supposed necessity of basing an empirical system of ethics on the facts of animal as opposed to specifically human life, it would not follow, as he seems to assume, that those facts must be regarded as ultimately physical, *i.e.* capable of being adequately expressed in terms of mass, velocity, and acceleration alone. For there are clearly three alternative possibilities before us. Either (*a*) the facts of life may be capable of adequate representation by purely *physical* hypotheses, or (*b*) our physical formulæ might turn out on closer examination to be mere symbols for what can only be represented adequately in terms of a *psychical* character, or (*c*) we may need for the adequate representation of the facts both physical and psychical hypotheses—the full reality being of a two-sided *psycho-physical* kind.

Now the arguments by which Green satisfies himself of the existence of an Eternal Self and the inadequacy of empirical ethics have their full force only when brought against the first of these three ways of conceiving the facts with which natural history and empirical psychology have to deal. It is a defect which neutralises the effect of his whole argument for the reality of the supra-sensuous self that it rests throughout upon the assumption that the *origins* of the self, supposing it to have had a beginning, must be conceived of as a series of purely physical events. A self which is a resultant of any process of development must, he assumes, be the result of a merely physical process. Yet it is clear that we may grant him that the self cannot be the result of a purely physical development without for a moment granting that the *self* is in his sense "eternal," uncreate, or not a thing of evolution. In other words, what Green succeeds in proving is simply that the part played in the universe by consciousness is not that of a secondary resultant called into being by the play of physical forces; what he has set out to prove, but has not proved, is that *my* consciousness or *yours* is, on one side of it, not the result of any development at all. His argument may perhaps be thrown into the form of a syllogism, thus: Subject and object are relative terms which mutually imply one another, and cannot exist independently of each other; matter and motion and the physical world are objects, *ergo*

matter is not subject, and conversely the subject which knows, desires, etc., is not matter. From this result, which we have no desire to impugn,[1] he goes straight to the further conclusion that each and every self or subject, not being a secondary product of physical forces, cannot have come into being, and cannot have a natural history.

All that has really been proved, however, is that, if the self has a natural history, that history is one that cannot be given in physical terms. It has fairly been shown that consciousness is as primary and indispensable a datum for our scientific theories as extension or motion, and that the latter have no existence except in relation to some consciousness which perceives them; it has not been shown that that particular consciousness which I call my *self* is without beginning or history in time. For anything that the argument just cited proves to the contrary, my self may perfectly well be a created thing or secondary product, only if so the "forces" of which it is the product must be of a psychical or at any rate psycho-physical kind; the conditions of its formation cannot be adequately or properly stated in the terms employed by the purely physical sciences, but it does not follow that they cannot be ascertained and the history of the formation of the self written by the empirical psychologist. The refutation of the empiricist is so far only valid against one who is a materialist as well as an empiricist; against the Spinozist psychologist it has no cogency whatsoever.

It is as well to understand quite clearly the nature of the point which has yet to be proved before those who, like ourselves, "maintain" a position of psychological empiricism can feel ourselves refuted by Green's argument. We agree with him in regarding consciousness in general, or rather empirical moments of consciousness, as the primary fact of which any scientific theory must take account, and in rejecting the notion that physical objects have any being except as the contents of actual or possible experience. But we require, before we can admit Green's contentions, to have it proved that the existence of that finite centre of consciousness which I call my *self* is a

[1] Yet we must not forget that it may be convenient for certain purposes to treat the psychical side of things as the function of a physical organism. And so far as this treatment is convenient it is legitimate. Only it is always a half-truth.

primary fact also, and not to be explained by any more ultimate psychological facts. Unless in some sense or other not only consciousness in general but finite selves are ultimate underived realities, there seems to be no meaning in speaking about the "Eternal Self." The eternity of consciousness, in some form or other, is no more identical with the "eternity" of my self, than the "eternity of matter" with the eternity of the table at which I write these lines.[1]

What evidence, then, does Green supply which might lead us to affirm the underived character not merely of consciousness, but of the "self"? As far as I comprehend his reasonings, all the evidence for this important transition is afforded by the consideration that a series of related events cannot possibly become aware of itself as a related series.[2] Hence, it is urged, the subject which is aware of the series must be itself something which is no member of the series, and therefore, more universally, a self which apprehends the contents of its own experience as a related series of events in time must itself stand altogether outside the time-series, and thus be "eternal." This reasoning, though it seems to have found considerable acceptance, does not appear to me to be either

[1] There is, of course, a sense in which anything and everything may be called eternal. You may say to an all inclusive consciousness every time would be the present, and so every successive stage in the world's history abiding and eternal. Or again you may say that everything is eternal when considered solely with respect to its quality and out of relation to its duration. But such "eternity" will not serve as a *differentia* for anything in particular (the mind of the oyster is in this sense as much "eternal" as the mind of the philosopher; see Green's own admission, *Works*, iii. 159). And besides, the "eternity" which can be thought of as excluding origination by evolution is something very different from a subjective contemplation of objects *sub quadam specie eternitatis*. If you understand by the human mind's "eternity," as Spinoza does, and as Green sometimes appears to do, simply its power of contemplating itself as in some way a part of or "organic to" the Divine intelligence, then there is nothing in the "eternity" of the human mind which excludes its origination by evolution. Of a mind eternal in this sense we may well say what Plato (*Timaeus*, 31B) says of the whole sensible world, γεγονὼς ἐστί τε καὶ ἔτ' ἔσται.

[2] This position itself needs more qualification than Green gives it before it can be accepted as psychologically true. See an important article by Dr. G. F. Stout on "Perception of Change and Duration" in *Mind* for January 1900, where Green's assumption that "in order to be aware of B as succeeding A we must have both A and B before consciousness at once" is subjected to a searching criticism. I hope it is not impertinent to say that such observations as I have been able to make upon myself fully bear out Dr. Stout's conclusion, that in such a case A need not *as such* be present at all when B is. The instance of the apprehension of a musical phrase, which is not perceived as a whole until the last note is heard, *i.e.* when the previous notes are no longer before consciousness (see *loc. cit.* p. 5), seems to me crucial. Like Dr. Stout and the authors he cites, I completely fail in such a case to detect "memory-images" of the vanished notes. But of course an opponent may say that this is due to defective observation.

clear or conclusive, and, at the cost of a little delay in my argument, I should like to point out some of the fallacies and ambiguities which appear to lurk behind the words of a seemingly obvious proposition. "No one and no number of a series of related events can be the consciousness of the series as related. Nor can any product of the series be so either" (*Proleg. to Ethics*, p. 20, *ad fin.*). . . . "For this reason an intelligent experience, or experience as the source of knowledge, can neither be constituted by events of which it is the experience, nor be a product of them" (*ib.* p. 21). These sentences clearly contain two statements with the truth of which we, at least, cannot quarrel. If the general philosophical views advocated in the first chapter of this essay are in principle sound, it must at once follow that the "self" to which the contents of all my adult experience, in so far as they are attended to at all, are related as "its" experiences cannot possibly be identified with any one in the series of experiences, nor yet with the mere succession of experiences considered simply as a succession of atomic psychical events. The fate of Hume's brilliant investigations into the nature of personal identity remains as a standing warning against the mistake of identifying the unifying principle in our experiences with one of its own objects. And further, we too are prepared to admit without reserve that the "self" to which all articulately expressed experiences are referred cannot have come into being as the result of a series of changes which *ex hypothesi* preceded the existence of all consciousness, and were therefore relative to no consciousness at all, in no sense contents of experience.

But Green's language, as quoted a few lines back, is intended to convey along with these two propositions two others which are by no means identical with them. He jumps from the admission that the experiencing self cannot be identified with any one or any succession of its own states to the assertion that it stands outside the temporal series altogether, and from the admission that it cannot have arisen as the product of a series of purely physical events to the conclusion that it has no origin in time at all. On both these points we find ourselves obliged to part company with him and with the Hegelian school of psychologists in general. For all that has really been proved about the relation of the knowing

self to the time-series is that it is not one or any of the presentations which succeed one another in the course of our experience; in fact, that the centre of our personal identity is, relatively to the changing presentations which make up the series of our perceptions and thoughts, permanent in time, not that it is "eternal" or independent of duration.

What is required in order that the successive presentations A, B, C may all be recognised as experiences of the one soul or self *d*, is not that *d* itself shall stand in some mysterious way outside the time series, but simply that alongside of the transition A, B, C there shall remain elements in the experience of *d* which are the same at the moment when C is being experienced as when A was being experienced. This state of things may be expressed symbolically thus: Let *d* stand for the central unity of the psychical life of a single finite centre of consciousness; A, B, C for successive events in the way of actual sensation; *a*, *b*, *c* for the special modifications attending the experience of each successive event in virtue of the transition from the last event, whether we suppose those modifications to be memory-images, associations, or simply "psychical dispositions," etc. Also let X_1, X_2, X_3 stand for the remaining masses of sensational, ideational, and emotional elements which are present in consciousness along with A, B, C respectively. Then the successive cross-sections which could be taken across the consciousness of *d* during the transition from A to C will be roughly symbolised by AX_1 . . . aBX_2 . . . $abCX_3$ . . . The sufficient and necessary condition of the apprehension, explicit or implicit, by *d* of these successive states as states of the single self is that X_1, X_2, X_3 shall contain some common element of sensation, ideation, or feeling which remains unchanged while sensation A gives place to sensations B and C. If this condition be fulfilled, it is in no way necessary to *d*'s recognition of the unity of its own inner life that the element common to X_1, X_2, X_3 should persist *throughout* the whole of *d*'s experiences unchanged. What is needed for the growth of the conscious mental unity that we call conscious selfhood is not the absolute permanency of any element in mental life, but simply such relative permanency as is secured by the presence in all psychical life of a body of sensational and emotional "psychical

fringes," which change at a much less rapid rate than the sensations and ideas which from time to time occupy the "centre" of consciousness.[1]

Such a body of relatively permanent psychical contents we have in the "organic" sensations and the habitual emotional tone by which they are characterised, as well as in the habits which we have inherited or acquired in the earliest period of our mental life. None of these can indeed be said to be, strictly speaking, permanent and unchanging. The organic sensations to which I am accustomed to-day must undoubtedly be very different from those which were usual with me as an infant, as well as from those to which I shall become accustomed if I live to old age. Could a man of thirty suddenly experience those organic sensations which at eighty will stand to him for excellent bodily health, he would in all probability think himself either mad or seriously ill. And there is a similar difference between the pyschical contents connected with the habits proper to different periods of life. Probably, then, there is no one psychical content, be it organic sensation or feeling-tone, which really remains permanently the same from the beginning to the end of life. But as compared with the rapid succession of special sensations and of ideas and the emotions connected with them, the changes in organic sensation and its feeling-tone conditioned by the growth of the organism are brought about by imperceptible degrees, and may therefore within the limits of a single well-marked period of organic development be regarded as practically non-existent.[2]

Here then, in the empirically ascertained fact that the organic sensations and the accompanying feeling-tone are relatively stable within long periods of life, we have all that is necessary for the growth of a distinction between the

[1] In fact, the eternal self-identity of my "Ego" or "real self" may very well be, not the ultimate presupposition of nature and knowledge, but an inevitable psychological illusion which it is the business of psychological science to dispel. Or again, we might say with Spinoza that there are many different degrees of such "eternity" as is possible to the human mind, and might go on to maintain that your mind only becomes "eternal" in so far as you make it so by setting your affections "on things above."

[2] Even complexes of perception belonging to the special senses, if constantly presented without material modification, may play an important part in making up the "self." It would probably go some way to unsettle my consciousness of self if my first glance at the looking-glass some morning should show me a face markedly changed in colour or expression from that to which I am accustomed as "mine," or even a beard where no beard ought to be.

permanent self and its incessantly changing sensations and ideas. Absolute self-identity, indeed, from the cradle to the grave, is not guaranteed by the relative permanence of these elements of our experience, but absolute self-identity, when closely examined, proves to be hardly intelligible. Self-identity is, in fact, altogether a matter of degree: I am in a much truer sense the self-same person who wrote the first chapter of this essay than I am the self-same being who was born nine and twenty years ago in a certain English village; the identity in the first place is so complete that it seems at first sight a matter of immediate experience rather than of inference; there is a qualitative sameness of organic sensations, of psychic "fringes" made up of sensations of sight, touch, etc., derived from the surroundings amid which I am writing, of sensations and emotions connected with the performance of habitual actions (*e.g.* from the lighting and smoking of my pipe). With the baby in the cradle, on the other hand, I have hardly any points of psychical identity; organic sensations, sensational elements derived from habitual environment, from habitual actions, emotions, all are utterly different. If I were called upon to specify any single characteristic common to the baby and my present self, I should probably have to fall back upon such relatively insignificant, and in any case non-psychical peculiarities as a general resemblance in cast of features and possibly the possession of a mole or two. And I need hardly remind the reader of the important part that changes in organic sensation, brought about by cerebral or other disease, play in effecting the altered sense of personality which is a common feature of cases of insanity, nor yet of the more transient psychical changes of the same kind so ordinarily connected with the great modifications of organic sensation which occur at such physical crises as puberty and "change of life."[1]

We may fairly conclude, then, not only that in the relatively stable sensation and emotion masses of which organic sensation is the core, we have a sufficient basis for the distinction between the self and its experiences, but further,

[1] It is notorious that these organic crises are the periods at which that sense of domination by a strange individuality which is called now "inspiration" and now "possession" most commonly and most readily occurs. Compare also the part played by prolonged fasting, etc., in the lives of "prophets" of every age and every race.

that any metaphysical theory which, like that of the "Eternal Self," attempts to attribute to the inmost core of selfhood an *absolutely* unchanging character, is in open conflict with patent psychological facts. The centre of identity, which we can discover in our own inner life, is to begin with not "timeless," but only relatively *permanent in time*, and further, it is not absolutely but only relatively unchanging. There is no characteristic of the mental life whatever which really remains the same without modification from birth to death. If we seriously ask ourselves, supposing the "Eternal Self" to represent a psychological fact of any kind, what fact does it stand for? there can be, at least as it seems to the present writer, only one answer to the question. The "Eternal Self" of Green is in the strict sense no "self" at all; it stands outside all our struggles, all our interests, all our hopes; in a word, it is the mere logical abstraction of the relation between subject and object, and its "eternity" can mean no more than that the distinction between subject and object is a fundamental and primary characteristic of human consciousness. Now, even supposing this doctrine to be true, there is something of the charity which gives a stone where bread has been asked for about a proceeding which promises to prove to me the "eternity" of my best and highest self, and then fobs me off with a demonstration that the subject-object relation is an ultimate psychological fact. For with all respect to the subject-object relation, I must decline to regard it as in any way identical with the self whose victories are my triumphs and defeats my shame. Whatever else my "self" may be, it is at least something incommunicably mine and not another's; no one else can know exactly the same thrill of rapture over its successes nor the same glow of shame over its failures. But the subject-object relation is no more peculiarly mine than another's; it was my father's before me and will be my son's after me; like Iago's imaginary purse, "'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands." As Mr. Bradley has said about the spiritual monads of a kindred moral philosophy, such a self, supposing it to exist, is a man's self just about as much as his "star."

And really, when one comes to look into it, this hypostatised abstraction seems to have as little right to the epithet

"eternal" as to the name "self." As we have already seen, it is one of Green's initial assumptions that the subject-object relation is a primary form of all specifically human experiences, and as such has no history behind it. This assumption, however, seems, to say the least of it, open to serious question. All the evidence offered in favour of it by Green consists in the reflection that the existence of an object presupposes the existence of the subject for whom it is an object, and that consequently it is self-contradictory to regard the knowing subject as the result of processes which have no meaning except as objects for a subject. Now so far as it goes this reflection is correct enough, but it does not go so far as might appear at first sight. To begin with, it is clear that the argument only proves that my subject-consciousness cannot be the product of processes which stood out of all relation to a subject; it emphatically does not prove that my subject-consciousness may not be the result of processes known by some one else's subject-consciousness—for instance, my father's or mother's. The moment I realise that the events which I call my begetting and birth, as they would be described in any work on physiology, consist partly of descriptions of processes which were actual factors in the experience of my parents, partly of "symbolic" accounts of other processes, as I have reason to believe they would have appeared under more or less definitely formulable conditions of observation, it becomes manifest that the relativity of object to subject in no way precludes the possibility of *my* subject-object consciousness having had a beginning and a history which it is the business of genetic psychology, helped out at need by embryology and physiology, to write.

But we may go further than this, and impugn the central position of Green's psychology. What is relative is not "subjects" nor "objects," but merely their subjectivity and objectivity. As Riehl expresses it, "Relativ sind nicht die Objecte (and we may add, nicht die Subjecte) sondern ihr Object-sein." In other words, we seem justified in denying that the subject-object relation is a primary and indispensable form of human experience. If we will reflect upon all that can be ascertained about the psychical life of the human embryo and the human infant in the days and weeks immedi-

ately after birth, we shall assuredly see reason to believe that there was a stage in our own experience when we had not yet learned to interpret our sensations as referring to "objects." Indeed, I will hazard the suggestion that states of experience in which the subject-object category is for the time being in abeyance are by no means unknown even in our adult mental life. Who is there, for instance, who does not know what it is to be so absorbed in the immediate sensuous enjoyment of the sights and smells of a meadow on a warm summer's day, or in the strains of a piece of orchestral music, as for the moment to lose all consciousness of himself as in any way being anything more than a succession of lights and scents and sounds, or of these as in any way objects other than himself? It is, of course, impossible to describe such a selfless condition in the relational language which we have at our disposal, but I feel sure that there will be few indeed among my readers who have not had some experience of the moods to which I am referring. And, apart from the occasional moments of reverie in which for the instant it is given to our poor distracted humanity to realise something of the harmony and peace of the direct vision of an animal or a god, the degrees to which the subject-object category adequately describes our ordinary experiences are infinitely various. Our perceptions of sight and touch, for instance, appear to us all much more objective than our perceptions of hearing and smell, and these again more objective than our organic sensations. Most people would probably refuse to call the sensation of hunger an "object," and would hesitate about applying the term to the smell of a rose or the note of a violin, while, on the other hand, the plain man very properly refuses to be convinced by all the misplaced ingenuity of physicist intruders upon the sphere of psychology that his perceptions of colour are anything but "objective." A review of the facts, such as we have no space to enter upon here, would probably show that the most important factors in producing the conviction that a given perception is "objective" are (1) spatiality, (2) resistance, (3) relative persistence. Thus a colour appears to the ordinary man more objective than a tone, partly because it appears to be placed outside him in space, and partly because the colour-properties of things appear to depend for

their permanent perceptibility on fewer and less variable conditions than their tone-properties. A piano always seems to have much the same colour in the daylight, but it only gives out sounds when the keys are struck, and even then the sound resulting from a given key depends on very variable circumstances; the piano easily gets "out of tune." Hence it is not without some justification that the "naïve realism" of popular thought inclines to the view that the colour is "in" the object, but the tone "in" me. As for organic sensations, I would simply ask the reader to judge for himself whether any violent organic pain does not tend for the time being to annul the subject-object consciousness altogether, especially if it is a "diffuse" and vaguely located pain. Even so definitely localised a sensation as that of toothache may produce this effect if it is only intense enough. In the most painful moments of a night of toothache, it hardly seems to be *we* that have the toothache; the pain seems to drive out every other content of consciousness, until it alone constitutes for the time being the whole of our experience; we do not so much *have* it, we *are* it. For the time, past and future, and the external world seem forgotten and abolished, and the universe consists of one big impersonal throb of anguish.

In the light of such considerations as these we seem driven to the following conclusions: (1) The subject-object form of consciousness is not a primary and inseparable form of human experience. There is a more primitive state, which was probably our condition in our ante-natal days, as well as in our earliest infancy. At this earliest stage of experience we have as yet neither "subjects" nor "objects," but impersonal psychical contents. (2) The ordinary psychological laws of recognition, assimilation, and association, laws which there is every reason to suppose applicable to animal as well as to human mental life—will sufficiently account for the fact that qualitatively identical elements entering into different psychical contents are recognised and discriminated from their varying accompaniments. In this discrimination of regularly connected sets of experienced qualities from their varying concomitants we have the beginning of what is sometimes called the "objectification" of our sensations. (The name may be conveniently retained so long as we take care not to forget that the state of mind which

precedes this "objectification" is not one in which sensations are regarded as subjective, but one in which no distinction between subjectivity and objectivity exists.) The characteristics which make it specially easy for groups of connected sense-qualities to be thus discriminated, in other words, the characteristics which favour the development of the "object" consciousness, are externality in space, permanence or recurrence in consciousness without sensible modification of quality, resistance to attempts to produce such modification by the movements of our limbs. According as these characteristics manifest themselves more or less completely in the various departments of sense-experience, the complex clusters of qualities perceived by the various senses acquire to a higher or less degree that character of independent existence which is described in abstraction by the term object. For a full and admirable description of this development I must be content to refer the reader to chapters ii. and v. of H. Cornelius's excellent *Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft.* (3) Meanwhile, among the various *objects* thus differentiated from the original primitive experience-mass, there early appears one which comes to have a very special position in our developed thought and perception over against all the rest. This special object is the *subject* or self in its crudest and most primitive form.[1] It is originally identical with the body, but afterwards, under the pressure of experiences which show that changes may go on in the body without producing any effects in consciousness, comes to be distinguished from it in various more or less ambiguous and unsatisfactory ways. In fact, the puzzles about personal identity all arise from the fact that, though we cannot help trying to identify the object which is "ourself," it constantly refuses to be fully identified with any one object or group of objects within its experience. Its limits thus constantly fluctuate without any assignable bounds.

So much has been written on the subject of the gradual development of the child's sense of personality that it would be superfluous for me to insert a sketch of the process here.

[1] I am here using the term subject in the common sense in which it is the logical correlate of "object." In chap. i. the same word has been used to denote a finite centre of consciousness in general—apart from the question whether the subject-object relation exists for such a consciousness or not. This more extended use of the term is logically indefensible, but practically unavoidable, in the absence of any suitable designation of the simpler forms of psychical life.

It will be enough just to remind the reader of one or two important points which will be found more fully stated, together with the evidence for them, in any good book on child psychology. The most important of these points, in my opinion, is that the subject itself seems at first to be distinguished merely as one object from others; the full recognition of the unique position of the subject and its difference from all other objects whatever comes later. We have assumed the truth of this already by making our account of "objectification" turn entirely not on the distinction between the subject and its experiences, but on the distinction of some contents of experience from others. The empirical justification of this view is to be found partly in the fact that the self as originally conceived by children and primitive tribes is just the body, *i.e.* that complex of sensation-contents which it is, for various reasons, most easy and natural to discriminate from all others, partly in the well-known habit of many children of speaking of themselves during the earliest years of their lives in the third person.[1] Such a habit cannot well be explained satisfactorily except on the supposition that the child is at first to itself simply one object among a host of others; it takes time and mental development before the point is reached at which one group of sensation-complexes stand out against all others in the exclusive position expressed in speech by the use of the first personal pronoun. Even when this point has been reached, the self which the unsophisticated call "I" and "Me" still retains its character of object. If "I" and "Me" in the mouth of the plain man no longer mean just the body, they mean a soul conceived vaguely enough after the analogy of the body, and regarded, like it, as being some sort of sensation-complex; the pure "Ego" or "subject" that from its nature can never be object is so far from being a primary psychological reality that one may fairly doubt whether it has any existence at all except in the imagination of philosophers. It is nothing more than the bare logical abstraction of the distinction which, as we have seen, exists in the developed, though not in the

[1] It would be tempting to compare the mental condition stereotyped in the formulæ of a language like Japanese, which is said to possess no pronouns, but to express all relation between speaker and person addressed by nominal periphrases (F. Müller, *Grundriss*, ii. 2. 313); but this is propbably due, as F. Müller says, to false etiquette.

embryonic human consciousness, between the relatively fleeting contents which occupy the "centre" of consciousness and the relatively stable contents which form its psychic margin or fringe or setting.

If these conclusions are warranted, however, we are justified, I think, in asserting that the existence of the "Eternal Self" is inconsistent with all that scientific psychology has to teach us of the actual growth of personality, and the arguments by which that existence is supposed to be proved fallacious and inconclusive. And if this is the case, we may well maintain that no satisfactory theory of ethics can be built upon so unstable a foundation. Yet, lest I should not have carried the reader with me in all that I have said in the last section, I will add one further contention to what has been urged already, and it shall be this: (*b*) If the "eternal" self exists, it is yet positively useless and out of place in a theory of ethics. For in ethics we are dealing throughout with time-processes, wants, movements towards their satisfaction, duties and their discharge, and with these as taking place in the psychical history of concrete individual selves. In other words, whether there really is an eternal spiritual principle which is in some transcendental sense myself or not, the self with which I have to do in moral theory and practice is an empirical self, made up of peculiar physical and psychical dispositions and tendencies, such as in all probability never have appeared and never will appear together in any previous or future human being. It is for this complex empirical product of heredity and environment, and the thousand incalculable conditions that we call chance, and not for that abstraction of the subject-object relation which is in me just what it is in any other man, that I am called upon to advise and act.

The "eternal" self of Green and his followers, then, is (*a*) out of all relation to the empirical wants and aspirations which it is the business of a sound morality to satisfy. An "eternal" self which is always just what it is now can have nothing to do with desires of unattained satisfactions and aspirations after unrealised ideals. And a "timeless" self must somehow stand outside all the processes by which we get our satisfactions and reach our ideals, for all are time-processes. The "eternal" self, then, if it exists, seems neither to feel our needs nor to

share our enjoyments, neither to be enriched by our acts of virtue nor impoverished by our crimes. It would apparently be unaffected by the loss of all our laboriously gotten spoils, and we may be excused if we conclude that it has had little to do with the winning of what it can afford to lose with such indifference. Through the whole course of our life it must, if it would not forfeit its timeless self-sameness, remain untouched by all the changes and chances of fortune and mortal circumstance. Surely in ethics, of all sciences, such a "self" as this has no place.

(*b*) Nor do I see what use can be made of the "Eternal Self" in establishing a theory of duty. Suppose I am told that the general precept of morality is, "Realise thine Eternal Self." The question at once arises, But *why*, if my Eternal Self is real already? nor can the doubt be properly met with an easy paradoxical answer, "That is just why." Waiving this difficulty, how am I to know *what* to realise? This self that is but the abstraction of the subject-object relation is shadowy and formless as the moonlight reflection of a ghost; it is realised as much in one mode of action as in another, as real in crime as in heroism, in indolence as in strenuous industry. *Be yourself!* is no doubt to most men a valuable moral precept, but only because they understand it of the self known empirically to them, or such part of it as they deem worthiest. Be yourself never means be the subject-object relation! or be the understanding which makes nature! To take the maxim in this sense would make it practically identical with Kant's formal imperative, and would expose us to all the unanswerable criticisms which have been passed by Hegel and his successors upon the Kantian categorical imperatives. Hence, just as Kant has to pass from the formality of his original imperative to the concept of humanity as a great social community before he can get any definite content for his system of duties, so Green has tacitly to identify an eternal self which, as first described, is the mere logical form of the subject-object relation, with the ideal of a perfect human society. Yet there is really between the two a great gulf which no logical ingenuity can satisfactorily bridge over.

It seems as if Green's account of the "Eternal Self" had arisen from an amalgamation of elements derived from two

very different sources. On the one hand, his study of Hume and the Associationists seems to have impressed him strongly with a sense of the necessity for investigating the subject-object relation and the nature of predication, two points which were both unduly overlooked in the Association psychology. On the other hand, he brought to this task a conception of the world as a spiritual being derived from Spinoza and Hegel. In the "Eternal Self" we seem to get as a result of this double philosophical activity an unfortunate fusion of the "subject" of the subject-object relation with the God of Spinoza. By this fusion, Spinoza's God is largely emptied of contents; instead of being the most concrete of realities, and embracing within himself all the "eternal modes" which constitute the "essence" of individual souls, he has become an abstract logical category repeated without modification in each of the countless individuals; and the "eternity" of the human mind, instead of being identified with its power of understanding its own history and destiny, has to be placed in its supposed exemption from the general process of organic evolution. Hence, akin as Green and Spinoza were at heart in their conception of the world, there is no philosophic system which more readily adapts itself to the postulates of evolutionary science than Spinoza's; there is none which it is more difficult to reconcile with those postulates than Green's. If Green's views of ethical method are sound, then ethics and ethics alone among the sciences constitutes a standing exception to the general course of the progress of human knowledge at the present day.

There is just one more point upon which I should like to offer a few remarks before passing on to that more detailed examination of ethical facts which will occupy the remainder of this essay. It may reasonably be expected that we should indicate the reasons for the popularity of those metaphysical theories of ethics which we have found to be at once so widespread and so fallacious. The secret of the hold which these theories have upon students of moral science is, I think, to be found in the special interests naturally attaching to the knowledge of one's self and one's duty. The alternative to the acceptance of a metaphysical theory of the self as the basis of an ethical system is a frank recognition that our

psychological and ethical concepts are, like the concepts employed in the physical sciences, of a provisional and symbolic character, and only partially adequate as representations of fact. But this admission, so readily made where the objects of nature and the laws of physics are concerned, is only given with the greatest reluctance when it is a question of our insight into our own mental constitution and our duties. Our interest in the knowledge of ourselves is so great, and the practical issues which depend upon our comprehension of our duties so considerable, that we find it almost impossible to believe that there is the same admixture of arbitrary abstraction and one-sided hypothesis in our theories about the nature of the soul as in our theories about matter and force. Here, we think, if anywhere, we cannot afford to repose our confidence in anything short of final and unalterable truth. And as the history of metaphysical speculation has but too often shown, it is but a single step from, "We cannot afford to stop short of final and unalterable truth," to the assertion "We have not stopped short."[1] Thus does our sense of the gravity of the issues at stake affect our judgment on the character of the information before us.

Yet, if the argument of this and the preceding chapter has any validity, it must by now be abundantly clear that as a matter of fact our psychological and physical hypotheses grow up in much the same way as our physical theories, need readjustment from time to time in view of new discoveries in much the same fashion, and lie open to much the same criticism from the metaphysician and the epistemologist. For instance, the analytic psychologist is bound, for the purposes of his science, to treat the concrete processes of mental life as complexes formed by the combination according to given laws of simpler elements, just as the physical philosopher treats the sensible masses of matter as complexes built up of imperceptible corpuscles. Yet, whatever may be the fortunes of physical atomism, no scientific theory can be more manifestly a merely "symbolic" way of representing the facts of

[1] The readiness with which we commonly allow ourselves to confuse the propositions, "I cannot afford to be in the dark about the nature and destiny of my soul," with the very different statement, "I am not in the dark about it," is well illustrated by the "*Credo ut carbonarius*" attitude of the disciples of Professor James towards metaphysical questions of this kind.

experience than psychological atomism. It is a scientific scheme which is of inestimable service, yet we cannot but perceive that as an account of what actually happens in the soul it is inadequate to the point of absurdity. So again with all our formulations of laws of recollection, recall, etc. It needs very little critical insight to see that our whole terminology, when we speak of the disappearance of ideas from consciousness, of the traces they leave behind them of their reinstatement or reproduction, is made up of the most barefaced symbolism, and makes no attempt to give anything like an adequate account of what actually takes place in the psychological organism when we forget or recollect. Yet our terminology, mythological as much of it confessedly is, happens to be sufficiently near the truth to lead to approximately true results, and consequently justifies our provisional use of it. *E.g.* when we talk, as some psychologists do, of the continued existence in an unconscious form of the memory-images or ideas corresponding to various experiences, our language is, strictly taken, self-contradictory and nonsensical, and therefore clearly does not adequately represent the way in which the psychophysical organism is really affected by a temporarily forgotten experience. Still, we may on the basis of this merely metaphorical and "symbolic" psychology construct a fairly good working theory of the conditions under which the forgotten experience will be remembered again, and thus the fiction of the continued existence of the memory-image in an unconscious form may be allowable as a working hypothesis until some one invents a better, provided only we do not make the mistake of treating it as an adequate and truthful description of facts.

A thorough examination of the hypotheses and assumptions of current psychology would confirm us in the convictions which the examples just cited suggest. We should at every turn be compelled to acknowledge that the theories of psychology are not deductions from metaphysically certain first principles, but are convenient working hypotheses for the colligation of facts about the mental life.[1] And as the facts of mental life are hitherto only very imperfectly and

[1] For a fuller consideration of this matter the reader may be referred to M. Rauh's valuable work, *La Méthode dans la Psychologie des Sentiments*, Paris 1899.

inaccurately known, we have every reason to suppose that many of our most prominent psychological hypotheses and generalisations are destined to undergo no slight transformation as the regions of fact with which they are concerned become better known and more fully explored. Why then, we may reasonably ask, should we not recognise that the same is the case with the propositions of ethics? Ethical science, it is true, has on the whole been more assiduously cultivated in the past than psychology, and the questions which it seeks to answer are in the main easier of solution. Yet the connection between ethics on the one side and the sciences of psychology, anthropology, and even natural history on the other is so obvious and so close that it should be clear that the defects of the latter are certain to be reflected in the imperfections of the former. A really satisfactory ethical theory would have to be based upon a reasonably complete examination of the facts of the ethical consciousness. And these facts are not to be obtained in their entirety, as we too often seem to assume, by the mere reflection of a civilised and philosophic student upon the sentiments which he finds in his own breast and in the literature of his age. Such a review of ethical phenomena as would enable us to construct a really adequate account of the moral ideal, the moral sentiments, and the probable course of moral progress is only to be obtained after a comprehensive investigation of the moral code and moral practice of our own age and civilisation, of other civilisations which are now flourishing or have flourished at an earlier period of history, of uncivilised nations and savage tribes in different parts of the world, even, as far as may be possible, of the customs and practices of the lower animals, in so far as they seem to imply the existence of sentiments of social approbation and disapprobation. Such an ethical theory can clearly not be constructed until our knowledge of psychology, anthropology, and natural history has advanced far beyond its present limits. In the meantime our ethical theories are bound to be more or less provisional; our descriptions of moral ideals and our analyses of moral sentiments may often be such as further discoveries in the sciences just mentioned will hereafter show to be erroneous. It is not indeed likely that future advances in psychology and

anthropology will very largely modify the main lines of the analysis of moral sentiments, but on the other hand we may reasonably expect that our views as to the course of moral development will undergo very considerable alteration as our insight into the mental structure and history of mankind grows clearer.

Thus it would seem that the most reasonable position for the writer on morals at the present time is first to give the best account of existing moral sentiments and ideals that his knowledge of psychology and of mankind will allow, pointing out at the same time that any such account is liable to undergo substantial modification with the advance of psychological and anthropological science, and then to contribute his individual part towards effecting such an advance by undertaking some piece of careful detailed investigation into the actual ethical practices and theories of present or past society. I have, however, already in the last chapter spoken so strongly of the importance for ethical study of special investigations of this class that it is unnecessary to say more on the subject here, though I should like once more to repeat that, as far as I can judge, it is altogether the most pressing and valuable work that can, with our present resources, be done in the ethical field, and is in every way more deserving of the attention of students of moral philosophy than the barren task of dressing up old generalisations in new disguises and repeating old polemics in new phraseology which the philosophical public seems to expect of them.

In the present essay I shall be compelled, both by the original limitations of my subject and by the limitations of my own studies, to confine myself to the former part of the double task we have just assigned to the moral philosopher. I shall do my best in the remaining chapters to present the reader with as accurate a picture as I am able to draw of the general body of current moral sentiment and theory, in so far as it bears upon the question of the proper basis of ethical science and the relation of ethics to metaphysics. We shall find that this survey of the concrete facts of ethics fully bears out the conclusions we reached in our first chapter upon a general consideration of the conditions of the problem. We shall see that, though the ethical sentiments and convictions

of civilised society have their origin in a single psychological root, they develop along two divergent lines, so that it is quite impossible to reduce the moral practice of an intelligent and conscientious member of a civilised community to the pursuit of a single consistent ideal; that this divergence of development manifests itself most conspicuously in the form of an irreconcilable conflict between two types of virtue, neither of which satisfactorily embodies the complete moral ideal; finally, that in the experiences of what for want of a better name we shall have to call "religion," this incurable duality of morality is partially, but only partially, overcome. With this result our examination of the ethical side of human nature will have reached its close. If we suceeed in showing that even in those experiences of an enlightened evangelical religion which are the highest development of the ethical side of human character, there are still elements of contradiction and discord which we do not know how to reduce to harmony, our case against treating the ethical life as the working out in detail of a metaphysical principle will be complete. May we hope that incidentally our treatment of ethical facts will, in its degree, help to prove the positive side of our contention: that the one necessary and sufficient basis for a theory of ethics is psychology—the word being understood in that comprehensive sense in which it includes the psychological side of anthropology and natural history?

CHAPTER III

THE ROOTS OF ETHICS

If before they had comen to the popular and received notions of virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, and the rest, they had stayed a little longer upon the enquiry concerning the roots of good and evil, and the strings of those roots, they had given, in my opinion, a great light to that which followed.—Francis Bacon.

It is not altogether an easy task to say with precision at what stage in the evolution of psychical life the modes of feeling and action which we call moral make their first appearance in a rudimentary form. In our attempt to find an appropriate starting-point for our review of the phenomena of the ethical life, we are unavoidably exposed to the risk of choosing our point of departure either too high or too low in the scale of psychical development. If our speculative interest lies chiefly in the description and analysis of the ethical facts as they present themselves in their fullest development in the conscious and systematic morality of civilised persons and races, we shall naturally be tempted to find the essential characteristics of morality in the possession of a sense of responsibility, a feeling of reverence for the moral law, or a concept of common good. If, on the other hand, what impresses us most strongly is the evidence afforded by comparative physiology and psychology for the continuousness of all bodily and mental life, we shall probably incline to simplify our notion of the requisites of moral action so as to embrace under that term as far as possible not only human but animal behaviour. It should be clear, however, that both these courses are open to serious objection. If we demand, for instance, with Green, as high a standard of intelligence as is implied in the possession of a concept of common good before we admit the claims of a

creature to be considered a moral agent, we run the risk of excluding from the list of moral beings all mankind, with the exception of a few saints and philosophers; while if, with Spencer, we are content to regard all conduct as good which results in a surplus of enjoyment, we shall be compelled to recognise mollusca and crustacea, to say nothing of still more rudimentary organisms, as moral beings. In either case it is not difficult to see that we shall be committing the so-called "psychologist's fallacy." The metaphysician who, because he finds that the concept of a common good is the logical form in which a conscious and articulate morality expresses itself, draws the conclusion that where this concept is absent there is no morality is crediting children, savages, and the unreflective generally, with the possession of ideas which he has only obtained himself by reflective analysis of actions which are in them the outcome of spontaneous and immediate emotion; the evolutionist who widens his conception of morality till it embraces all pleasure-producing and pain-avoiding movement is forgetting that animal behaviour, which in its results, as observed by an outside spectator, coincides with the moral action of human beings, may for all we know, in its inner and psychological aspects, as lived through by the animal itself, be entirely devoid of those features which bestow on human "moral conduct" its distinctive tone and character.

It is clear, then, that the proper course for the specially ethical philosopher lies somewhere between these two extremes. "Obligation," "duty," "common good," are, as we shall have abundant opportunity to see in the course of our investigation, highly complex concepts, and do not make their appearance as actually operative in determining the actions of mankind until a comparatively high level of customary morality and of intelligence has been attained; moreover, as we shall also see reason to believe, there are aspects of morality which each of these concepts fails to embody; they express for us not the original single psychological root of moral sentiment and conviction, but different sides of the diverging lines of development which the original moral sentiment undergoes in the course of social evolution. On the other hand, our knowledge of animal psychology is as yet not sufficiently accurate and extensive to enable us to say to what extent the types of sentiment which in

human beings we know as moral exist in a more rudimentary form in the infra-human world. That animal behaviour, if closely studied by competent psychologists, would present us with such *analoga* of morality it is only reasonable to believe, but in the absence of really trustworthy information on the subject it would be highly unscientific to found our ethical theories upon uncertain and fanciful interpretations of actions which we can only study from the outside.

The task of the moral philosopher is thus exactly similar to that of the psychologist. In the present state of our knowledge, at any rate, it is the primary business of both to present us with an analytical description of the workings of the adult civilised human mind couched in the simplest possible terms and harmonising with all that we know of the previous development of the individual and the race. Our first business, then, as students of morals is to ascertain what is the simplest and most rudimentary form in which the distinctively moral sentiments can be detected in specifically human experience; to the beast-world, at present at any rate, we are not justified in looking for more than incidental analogies confirmatory of conclusions already based upon an examination of our proper subject-matter, the human mind. Within the limits thus prescribed us, the simpler and more rudimentary the psychical processes in which we can succeed in detecting the essential features of moral life the more thoroughly will our work of analysis have been done. Here, as everywhere, the "Principle of Economy" must be the first principle of a sound scientific method, and our aim must therefore be to describe the complicated facts which we have to study by the aid of the fewest possible hypotheses, and to banish from the hypotheses we employ all merely "symbolic" concepts, that is, all concepts which are not correct representations of what under known conditions we believe to be possible contents of direct experience. In proportion as we are in the course of our description of ethical facts true to this methodological ideal, our hypotheses may be regarded as genuine theories, and our descriptions as true scientific explanations. Of the impossibility of completely attaining this ideal in any limited and circumscribed department of science we have already spoken in our first chapter.

The reader will perhaps have observed that we have more

than once in the last page or two made an apparently incidental but not unimportant assumption as to the character of the psychical facts which most immediately form the subject-matter of moral science. We have several times referred to those facts under the general name of "the moral sentiments," a designation more in vogue with writers of the last century than with the philosophers of to-day. This somewhat obsolete name for our subject has been purposely selected, in order to emphasise our dissent from the theories of ethical method which have been made popular by the metaphysical moralists of the Anglo-Hegelian school. In the hands of the moralists of this school ethics is, as a glance at the table of contents prefixed to such a work as Green's *Prolegomena* will show, a doctrine first of all of the metaphysical implications of moral *action*, and secondarily of the nature of the moral ideal or ultimate ethical end. We too have already admitted that a critical if not a constructive investigation of the moral ideal is an essential part of a complete account of ethical facts; but, holding as we do that psychology and not metaphysics is the true foundation of ethical theory, we are forced to maintain that the only satisfactory basis for such an investigation is to be sought in an accurate description of the ethical side of experienced psychological facts, that is, in an analysis of the ethical sentiments of civilised mankind.

Our choice of the term, however, has not been dictated solely by our desire to make it clear that we intend our ethical theories to rest upon a psychological and not a metaphysical analysis. We intended also, by speaking of the "ethical *sentiments*" as the primary subject of our discussion, to protest in advance against a popular view according to which the business of ethical psychology consists in the analysis of *motives*. Next to the doctrine of the dependence of ethics upon metaphysical theories of action, there is probably no mistake which is responsible for the introduction of more confusion into our science than the notion that the business of the moral philosopher is primarily to analyse the *motives* from which men act, or ought to act. The very word *motive*, if we examine it a little closely, will prove, like the kindred words "cause" and "action," to be a perfect hive of confusions in itself. Partly it seems intended to describe experienced

psychological facts; partly it stands for some sort of metaphysical theory about the ultimate nature of moral action, and it is practically impossible to disentangle the psychological facts from the extra-psychological accretions of metaphysical theory which the word regularly carries. The discussion of "motives" still plays so large a part in current ethical theories that it may perhaps be worth while to examine the meaning of the word and point out our objections to its employment with a certain amount of detail.

As we have already said, the meaning of the term "motive" seems to consist partly in metaphysical, partly in psychological theories. On the metaphysical side the term "motive" is intimately connected with theories about the "will" and the limits of its "determination" or "freedom," and the degree of identity between natural "causation" and "causation" in the moral sphere. It is debated, for instance, whether the will is inevitably "determined" to action by the "strongest motive," and if so whether the will can be called "free" or not, or again whether "motives" determine the will to action in the same sense in which natural "causes" determine the existence of their effects; whether there is such a thing as "natural necessity," and if so whether it is the same thing as moral necessity. The very enumeration of these problems is enough to show that they have to do not with the description of psychological facts, but with certain metaphysical theories about the ultimate implications of those facts, and we are, therefore, justified in banishing them one and all from a psychological system of ethics to that series of metaphysical discussions which, according to our view, should properly form an appendix and not a set of prolegomena to ethical science. It is not until we have succeeded in collecting and describing as adequately as we can the actual experiences of the moral life that it becomes possible to discuss the meaning and applicability of the categories of "freedom," "causation," and "determination" to the ethical phenomena. Just as we cannot profitably raise the question of the meaning and value of the category of "causation" in physical science until we have before us a considerable body of empirically won generalisations as to the actual facts about physical processes, so we cannot possibly ask whether, and in what sense, the "will" is "free"

or "determined" in moral action until we are in possession of a fairly complete description of the workings of the human mind as we actually experience them in ourselves or infer them from the behaviour of others. Until we have ascertained the actual facts about the ethical side of human behaviour, we have nothing to do either with the "will" or with "determination by motives" or "freedom." What we have actually before us is a vast number of mental processes or acts, as we may call them, if we consent to suspend all discussion of the metaphysical implications of that word, presenting certain common psychological characteristics, and it is only by first constructing, by the methods of empirical psychology, a detailed description of these processes, that we place ourselves in a position to judge whether the hypotheses suggested by the terms "will," "motive," "freedom," etc., are helps or hindrances to the clear and adequate description and representation of the facts. The construction of hypotheses so abstract and "symbolic," and so far removed from the suggestions of immediate experience, is the last, and not the first, step toward a comprehensive theory of the nature of morality.

We may, then, at the present stage of our examination of the ethical phenomena, dismiss from consideration as premature all the more metaphysical associations of an analysis of motives. The categories and hypotheses with which we begin our ethical inquiries must be not the most abstract and highly elaborate, but the simplest which suggest themselves upon a comparison of the various particular experiences to which we apply the common name of "moral." As in the physical sciences, so in the psychological, the only ultimately satisfactory method of procedure is to take our departure from those "natural" or "pre-scientific" hypotheses which suggest themselves irresistibly and almost insensibly upon the first serious comparison of a body of experienced contents possessing a common character. Such further elaboration and modification of our first "pre-scientific" hypotheses as is needed to bring them into close agreement with growing experience, and to render them more adequate as descriptions of the facts, will be inevitably brought about as, partly from extraneous causes, partly by the aid of the original hypotheses themselves, the contents of our experience become richer and more varied. When this process has

yielded a fairly elaborate and systematic set of secondary or "scientific" hypotheses applicable over a wide range of experience contents, it is time to test the adequacy and truth of the hypotheses by a comparison with the known formal characteristics of a "pure" experience, but not before. It would be premature to undertake an examination of the metaphysical implications of the concepts of ethics until we have ascertained empirically, by starting from the simplest hypotheses and adding to them or modifying them as increasing insight into the more complex ethical phenomena dictates, what are the concepts which ethics needs to employ.

If, then, our study of ethics is really to depend upon an analysis of our motives to action, we must agree to make the analysis a purely psychological one. We must agree to dismiss from our minds all metaphysical theories about the will and its "determination," and to imply by our use of the term "motive" nothing more recondite than some simple and obvious characteristic of the moral life as it is immediately experienced by mankind. The hypothesis involved in the use of the concept must be psychological, and it must be of the most elementary kind. As it happens, however, it is practically impossible to reconcile the use of the term "motive" to denote a constant and elementary psychological characteristic of moral action with the existing psychological associations of the word. As commonly employed, both in ordinary discourse and in writings upon ethical subjects, the word "motive" covers a confusion between two entirely different things: (1) the sentiment or emotion accompanying the initial stages of a course of action, (2) the end or result contemplated by the agent. It is in the former sense that we speak, for instance, of humanity or compassion as the motive which leads a man to relieve the necessities of his poorer neighbours, in the latter sense that we call the prospect of a competency for life the motive which has prompted a marriage or the acceptance of a situation.

It becomes, then, a matter of the first importance in any psychological account of human conduct, to be quite clear as to which of these two entirely distinct senses of the word "motive" we have in our mind. And it is, I think, manifest that it is only in the first sense of the word that an analysis

of "motives" can reasonably be said to be the foundation of scientific ethics. The "motive" in the second sense of the word is, to begin with, not what we directly praise or blame when we pass judgment on an act or a character as good or bad, and moreover it is often not a psychical fact at all. The all-important psychological fact that we have in our mind's eye when we praise a character as "good" is that the man of whom we are speaking is *affected* by the prospect of certain results of his actions, or by the contemplation of certain existing circumstances, in a particular way, pleasurable or painful as the case may be. A man is not regarded as good simply because he performs or even purposes the same actions as good men do, but because it is believed that in performing or purposing those actions he shares the emotions which the typically "good" exhibit in similar circumstances. As Aristotle rightly insists, the test of a man's virtue is that he should *feel* on the various occasions of life as the *φρόνιμος feels*.

And when it is said that a man may throughout a long life perform right acts from wrong and base motives, what is meant seems to be that his feelings during the contemplation or the execution of the virtuous act are not those of the virtuous man. For instance, the "self-righteous" man may set before himself much the same "ends" as the man of genuine virtue. He may oblige his neighbours, discharge all his obligations, relieve the distressed, and all this of set purpose, and yet he cannot be pronounced a man of real virtue, because in the performance of all these duties his emotions are other than those of the genuinely virtuous man. Though he may be entirely guiltless of consciously proposing the gratification of his self-conceit to himself as the result to be obtained by his conduct, it remains the fact that where the truly virtuous man would feel the stirrings of compassion, the "self-righteous" man experiences a thrill of self-satisfaction. As far as the "ends" actually proposed to themselves as objects of action go, there may be no appreciable difference between the two men; it is in their sentiments that the all-important distinction between the two consists, at least for psychology. In other words, the analysis of motives in any sense in which it is the primary question for moral psychology means the analysis of sentiments, the analysis of the emotions

called forth by the contemplation of various lines of action. It is in the quality and the strength of the emotions thus excited, whether by courses of action suggested for our imitation, or by reflection upon our own past behaviour or the behaviour of others that the psychological difference between the good and the bad man consists.

Similarly, when the goodness or badness of a particular act is said to depend upon the *motive* from which it is done, the meaning is that the morality of the action is determined by the quality and intensity of the sentiments awakened by the prospect of achieving certain results. A motive, in any other sense than this, can hardly be said to be a psychical fact at all. The "ends" for which we are said to act, and for aiming at which we are called good and bad, are most often not so much objects clearly and consciously set before ourselves as the results to be achieved by our action, as tendencies discerned in our actions by other persons after the event. As such they cannot be properly regarded as real psychological facts. The real psychological fact represented by another person's statement about the "ends" I pursue in life is commonly no more than this, that certain kinds of behaviour have throughout my career been attended by certain forms of emotion or sentiment. Thus when we say of a public man that his consistent aim throughout his life has been the exaltation of himself at the expense of his party or his country, we do not necessarily mean that as an actual fact he has consciously proposed this state of things to himself as the result to be brought about by his action; all that our charge need imply is that the occurrence or the prospect of situations in which he himself gains by the losses of party or country has habitually been attended with pleasurable emotion sufficiently intense to pass over into action. As we sometimes express ourselves, he may have pursued his selfish ends without realising that he was doing so. In order to warrant our damnatory verdict, the selfish sentiments which we ascribe to the condemned statesman must have been psychological matter of fact; the degree in which he was intellectually clear about his "ends" must always remain highly problematical.

We may take another example of the extreme ambiguity of the ordinary use of the term "motive," and the necessity of

extreme caution in admitting it into psychology, from a slightly different quarter. It is a commonplace of ethics that the human heart is so utterly deceitful that we are constantly being deluded not only as to the motives of our fellows, but even as to our own. What more common, for instance, than the discovery that an action we believed ourselves to have performed from motives of magnanimity was really prompted by a desire to make ourselves a reputation, or that what at the time struck us as a natural consequence of our love of justice was after all no more than the gratification of an old grudge? Or which of us, in declining a challenge to a duel, would be able to say without misgivings whether he was acting from cowardice or from a lofty sense of duty? In such cases as these we have at first sight a most puzzling psychological problem. If "motives" are, psychologically speaking, feelings, what can be the meaning of the assertion that I thought at the time of action that I was prompted by a generous motive, but now find that it was a base one? Surely, it may be argued, there can be no such thing as an unconscious motive; an emotion is, from the very nature of the case, just what it is at the time felt to be, nothing more and nothing less.

What, then, is the meaning of the common expressions which assume that a man may be mistaken about his own motives? What are the real psychological facts which these phrases are intended to describe? The solution of the problem is, I conceive, this. In a certain situation I find myself under the influence of emotions strong enough to lead me to confer a benefit upon some person not possessing any particular claims upon me beyond those arising from the fact that he is a fellow-man and is in need of assistance, and to bestow this benefit at some considerable cost to myself. So long as I have nothing to judge by except the fact that the sacrifice was made and that the emotions with which I made it were of a pleasurable kind, I shall naturally suppose that those sentiments were aroused solely by the need of a fellow-man, and were those of a generous person. But it may afterwards occur that occasions for similar sacrifices present themselves under circumstances in which there is no possibility of my act of beneficence becoming known to the world. Supposing

that on these occasions the emotions awakened by the contemplated sacrifices are altogether painful, and consequently lead me to refuse to make them, I shall then be driven, unless I am to assume the intervention of a radical change in my own character, in obedience to the principle of economy, to infer that other circumstances than the mere need of the person benefited were responsible for the emotions I felt on the former occasion, and consequently that these were not the sentiments of pure generosity. The psychological fact in the case of the mistakenly interpreted motive was simply the response to certain stimuli with emotion of a certain character and intensity. The emotion was, of course, just what it was felt as being; an unfelt emotion would be a *contradictio in adjecto*. The mistake came in, not in estimating the emotion, but in apprehending the circumstances necessary for its production, and the statement that my original belief as to the character of the motives has been proved erroneous is simply a "symbolic" way of saying that what I had hitherto believed to be the conditions present when the emotion was felt have been once more experienced, but without a revival of the emotion.

Examples of this kind might easily be multiplied, for the purpose of showing that any statement about *motives*, so far as it represents experienced psychical facts apart from metaphysical theory, can always be translated into a statement about the quality and intensity of a sentiment and the conditions under which it has been experienced. We shall do well, therefore, to prefer the unambiguous language of a confessedly empirical psychology to the obscure utterances of a hybrid science composed of psychology and metaphysics, mingled in unknown proportions, and to say boldly that the first part of a complete ethics is an analysis of the moral *sentiments*, in other words, an account, in the language of purely empirical psychology, of the emotions that we consider to have a moral quality, and the conditions under which they make their appearance. We have, in fact, to ask, In what do our feelings towards acts and characters that we judge good or bad differ from our feelings about those that we consider merely indifferent, and to what kinds of character and action do these peculiar emotions attach themselves?

This leads me to notice a further peculiarity of ethical method which has too often been overlooked. The key to the comprehension of our ethical sentiments is to be found in the analysis of the reflective judgments which we pass upon the actions of our neighbours and upon past actions of our own as we review them in memory. It is true that most recent moral philosophy has tended to substitute for the analysis of our moral judgments an analysis of our moral aims or ends. Instead of asking, "What sort of conduct is it that we approve?" recent moral philosophy, for the most part, prefers to ask, "What are the ultimate ends we are trying to secure when we act laudably?" We substitute, that is, for the examination of our ethical sentiments, as they express themselves in our habitual judgments on past actions, an attempt to examine the state of our own minds in the moment of action. This is, however, I conceive, a most unfortunate deviation from sound scientific method. It is in its effect upon ethical science much as if in our æsthetical theory we were to neglect the analysis of judgments of taste in order to examine the mental attitude of the creative artist, in the moment of creation, towards his work.

The reasons for preferring to found our ethics rather upon an analysis of the reflective moral judgment than upon an analysis of the action judged, appear to me in the main to be two. In the first place, the aims and ends we propose to ourselves as results to be achieved by our actions are so numerous and multifarious that it is practically impossible to reduce them to anything like system; our reflective judgments upon the moral quality of our behaviour, on the contrary, are already before we submit them to psychological analysis wrought into something like systematic shape; they are already judgments, not so much upon individual pieces of conduct, as upon classes of action. And in the second place, as our consideration of the meanings of the word "motive" has suggested to us, it is by no means easy to say exactly how much is before the mind in the moment of action. For, as we have seen, the "motive" popularly supposed to be influencing the mind of the agent may only in part be a real psychological fact. This difficulty is largely obviated by taking as the direct object of our study not our actions them-

selves, but the judgments which we pass upon them and the emotions with which we look back to them. For it is clearly a consequence of the more reflective character of the subsequent judgment passed upon an action, as contrasted with the more impulsive character of the action itself, that it is much easier to know what is before the mind when we praise or censure our own past actions or the actions of a third person than when we are directly acting. Every reflective judgment of praise or censure is, in fact, a sort of natural or pre-scientific ethical theory about the quality of a certain *class* of actions. Every such judgment, if fully stated, would have to take the form, "In so far as the psychological state of the agent at the time of performance of the action was such and such, the action was good or was bad." In every reflective judgment on character, then, we have, as we should not have if we began our science with an attempt to analyse directly the psychological condition of an agent during the performance of his action, a rudimentary universal generalisation.

And these rudimentary ethical universals are, for moral science, exactly what the rudimentary generalisations of pre-scientific thinking about the course of natural events are for physical science—the indispensable basis and starting-point for all more exact and scientific research. In ethics, as in all other departments of knowledge, our first conscious steps toward accurate science presuppose the previous possession of a number of more or less inaccurate generalisations. which have been won by unsystematic reflection and comparison, and may be called "unconscious" or "natural" hypotheses. To place an analysis of "motives," rather than an analysis of those *ex post facto* reflective judgments in which our opinion of the morality of whole classes of actions finds its expression, at the beginning of an inquiry into moral science, would be voluntarily to deprive one's self of the assistance of these "natural" hypotheses. Perhaps I may add, as further justification for the view here put forward, a quotation from what I have said on the same subject in another place. "If we would know what is of the essence of morality, perhaps our best course is to consider rather the nature of the moral judgments we pass on the acts of others than our own psychological state at the moment of action. No doubt the passing of moral

judgments on the acts of another implies a sense of morality as of something which we ourselves are bound to do, and the evolution of the one necessitates a corresponding growth of the other. But it will, I think, be found that, as a matter of fact, the moral judgment on outsiders becomes articulate earlier than the sense of our own moral short-comings: we learn to expect certain performances from those around us, and to be displeased if they are not forthcoming, before we have an equally acute perception of the corresponding obligations upon ourselves. Hence, if we would find what morality, in its simplest form, involves as an irreducible minimum, we must, I think, betake ourselves to the analysis of the moral judgment."[1] Of course it is obvious also that what is here said of our judgments upon the actions of others will apply without serious modification to our calm retrospective judgments upon our own past conduct, provided that there has been an interval of time sufficient to enable us to take an impersonal and dispassionate view of our proceedings.

We may sum up the positions at which we have now arrived in the following series of propositions. Ethics is an empirical science having its basis in the wider science of psychology. Its primary object is to effect an analysis of the moral sentiments, *i.e.* certain peculiar forms of emotion which are commonly aroused in us when we contemplate the past or prospective actions both of other persons and of ourselves. A satisfactory ethical theory would have, in the first place, to supply a psychological description of these emotional processes in simple and, as far as possible, in non-symbolic terms (that is, in terms each of which is itself under known conditions a matter of direct experience); in the second place, to write the history of their development, regarded as a chapter in the general psychological evolution of humanity: and finally, to give some account of the classes of action by which, in various stages of the history of civilisation, these emotional processes are aroused. In other words, the contents of a scientific theory of ethics would naturally fall into three main divisions: (1) an analytical, and (2) a genetic theory of the moral sentiments, and (3) an account of the moral ideal and of moral progress. The labour of constructing the

[1] *International Journal of Ethics*, April 1896, p. 368.

first of these three divisions of ethics, the analytical psychology of the moral sentiments, is considerably lessened by the fact that in all civilised societies the pre-scientific everyday reflection of the community has embodied the sentiments awakened by whole classes of action in a more or less systematic collection of moral judgments, which form in their entirety the customary moral code of the community,[1] and may, from the point of view of epistemology, be described as a body of "natural" hypotheses or theories on ethical subjects. This preparatory work of the unscientific understanding the moral philosopher accepts as the starting-point for his own more systematic investigations, which thus assume the form of an *analysis of the moral judgments.*

We may now describe ethics as we please, either as the *theory of moral sentiments* or the *theory of the moral judgment;* but we must, if we choose the latter designation, be careful to bear in mind that the *moral judgment* itself is in the last resort based upon moral sentiments, and constitutes, in fact, an incipient hypothesis as to the conditions under which the moral sentiments are evoked. The ultimate psychological fact of human nature which is responsible for the existence of ethics as a branch of inquiry is simply that the conduct of ourselves and of others affects us emotionally in certain ways, which must now be more particularly described.

What, then, are the simplest forms of emotion which can be regarded as distinctively ethical, or, in other words, are manifestly identical in quality with the more complex and highly developed moral sentiments of a civilised community, as expressed in its customary judgments of actions and characters? The answer to our question is indicated in admirable and

[1] Of course I am including in the "moral code," as here described, not only the "moral" code of society in the narrower sense, but also its "social code" and "code of honour." It is commonly only certain rules of conduct recognised by all classes of the community which get the name of "morality." Rules of conduct peculiar to particular classes are more commonly called "social regulations" or "rules of honour." The distinction, however, is at best one of degree; in kind the feelings evoked by a breach of morality and by a violation of the code of honour are indistinguishable. It is only when a "religious" sanction is attached to the one code and not to the other that the difference becomes one of importance. In a society which recognises no such religious sanctions, a breach of the code of honour may easily awaken more moral reprobation than an offence against morality. It is only linguistic associations that make it difficult for us to say that in certain societies a refusal to fight a duel is regarded as more immoral than an act of adultery. I reserve the consideration of the modifications undergone by ethics when brought into connection with religion for a later chapter.

forcible language in a characteristic passage from an eminent author whose delight it was to convey profound ethical truth in the guise of fantastic and sensational romance. "Right and wrong," says Paul Somerset in *The Dynamiter*, "are but figments and the shadow of a word; but for all that, there are certain things that I cannot do, and there are certain others that I will not stand." The empirical foundation of ethics is securely laid, apart from all metaphysical theories of freedom and the noumenal self, in the simple fact that there are certain things which we cannot see done without loathing, and certain others that we cannot see done without praising the doers.[1] The peculiarly ethical emotions, the feelings which find expression in all our moral judgments on men and events, are the feelings of approval and disapproval; the characteristically ethical attitudes towards things are those of praise and blame. It is this attitude towards the world which manifests itself in the systematic classification of things and of men as "good" and "bad." That man or that thing is "good" in our eyes the contemplation of which affects us with emotions of approbation, that "bad" which we cannot view without sentiments of loathing and disapproval.

The "good" is thus, psychologically considered, not to be identified with the "useful," nor the bad with the "useless" or "detrimental." It is, no doubt, as we have already admitted, one part of the moralist's task to discover the objective qualities in things and persons which arouse in us the ethical sentiments, and it is perfectly true that the investigation of this problem leads us to the conviction that it is in the main qualities useful, *i.e.* serving to maintain or increase vitality, to the individual and the community which are recognised as "good," but, looking solely at the psychological attitude expressed by the judgment, "This is good," we are forced to admit that it is primarily not the recognition of the usefulness

[1] The proposition in the text, however, needs to be supplemented by the consideration that there are certain things which we feel equally strongly we will do and make others do. It would be a mistake to suppose that morality is in origin merely prohibitive, though the mistake is natural in a civilised society in which the outward and visible embodiment of moral sentiment in law has come to have a mainly negative and restraining content. The native Australian, for instance, is *forbidden* by custom, so omnipotent that non-compliance is visited by death, to marry into the wrong class; but he is *compelled* by an equally binding custom to undergo the rites of initiation. "Thou shalt" is as primitive an expression of the moralistic temper as "Thou shalt not."

of an object, but the presence of the feeling of approval which the judgment expresses. Where our emotions are untouched, the perception that a given object is adapted to the securing of certain results is not enough of itself to call out the judgment "good." It is only when we are "interested" in the purposes for which a thing is "useful," in other words, only when our emotions are aroused, that we stamp the thing with our approval by calling it "good." One can easily imagine to one's self a race of beings absolutely without emotion, mere disinterested spectators of the course of the world and the life of man. Such onlookers would no doubt, according to the proverb, see more of the game of life than the players in it, whose vision is constantly liable to be confused by their passions. They would as readily as or more readily than ourselves detect the fitness of one thing and another for employment towards various ends, but to their impartial gaze there would neither be "goodness" about this fitness nor "badness" about its opposite; having themselves no feelings of interest in the events and processes of the world, they would praise nothing and censure nothing, and the vehement expressions of human ethical admiration and loathing, if they could once hear them, would to them be no more than words uttered in an unknown tongue and accompanied with apparently purposeless gestures and grimaces. Our transports of enthusiasm over some act of more than common nobility, and of rage at some unheard-of villainy, would probably appear to them as grotesque as the mouthings and gesticulations of an unintelligible Frenchman to an English yokel.

Either, then, we must redefine the "useful" so as to make it mean that which conduces to ends in which we feel an *interest*[1]—and this practically amounts to our own definition of "good,"—or else we must admit that the identity of the "good" and the "useful" is a synthetic proposition, and that the two concepts at least are of different origin. For methodological reasons we prefer the latter course. We understand by "good" whatever awakens in us the sentiment of approbation,

[1] We usually feel an interest in what conduces to our own preservation or increased vital efficiency, so that the "good" in most cases roughly coincides with the "useful." But for one who has lost the "desire to live," the good may be identical with decrease of vitality, in other words, with what is, for the biological onlooker, the harmful. This point will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter.

by "bad" whatever is regarded with disapproval or blame, and we leave all discussion of the degree to which the good is identical with the useful, the conducive to life, etc., for a later occasion. We say, then, that the primary ethical sentiments are those of approbation and disapprobation, and that the logical form in which the presence of these sentiments towards any object finds expression is the judgment in which the predicates "good," "bad," or their equivalents are asserted of that object. The exceedingly wide range over which the ethical sentiments extend is at once shown by the statement just made. Things, actions, persons, are all alike in some sense or other called "good" and "bad," and are all alike the objects of approbation and disapprobation during the earlier stages of intellectual development. As intelligence grows and accumulating experience leads to the recognition of such distinctions as that between persons and things, the modification of the primitive attitude towards the world involved in the creation of these categories naturally leads to corresponding modifications in the sentiments awakened by different classes of object. "Good" and "bad" come to have a difference of meaning according as they are employed to describe persons or things, and for the civilised consciousness only persons and their actions are directly objects of ethical sentiments, though, as it would be easy to show, things too only retain the name of "good" and "bad" in so far as the contemplation of their properties indirectly arouses those sentiments. To trace in outline the history of this development will be the object of a later paragraph of the present chapter.

Before we can enter on this subject, however, there still remain for consideration some points connected with the very simplest manifestations of the ethical sentiments. We have said that the primary ethical fact is a psychological one, and that it is this, that the most primitive human consciousness, that of the savage or the child, views some things and actions with feelings of approval and others with feelings of disapproval. It is in this psychological peculiarity that the moralist finds the characteristic which is, from his special point of view, the *differentia* of human nature. The merely "animal" consciousness, as we sometimes picture it to ourselves, in order by the contrast to invite special attention to the peculiarly human

type of mind, is figured as experiencing pleasure and pain, but not as knowing what it is to approve or disapprove, to praise or blame. Any mind capable of the judgment, "This is good," is, for the moralist, in its essential features a human mind, and, on the other hand, the mind which has not as yet the experiences expressed in such a judgment is as yet not truly human, and can only be called so where, as in the case of an infant of our own species, we have warrant to believe that subsequent mental growth will bring these experiences in its train. For the purposes of moral philosophy the minds of the higher animals, if there should ever appear reason for crediting them with the sentiments of which we are speaking, would be entitled to be considered as one in kind with our own, while the mind of a child that has not yet experienced these sentiments is only prospectively human.

Such a statement as the foregoing of the "irreducible minimum" of psychological development necessary for the appearance of morality will probably be found unsatisfactory by two very different schools of critics. One party will say that our "minimum" includes too little, the other that it comprises too much. From the one side we may expect to be told that "obligation," "sense of duty," "conscience," are simple and ultimate ethical facts, and that a consciousness for which these concepts do not exist is not really an ethical consciousness at all. From the other side we shall hear that approbation and disapprobation are themselves complex psychical states, and that, if we would begin at the very beginning, we must show how these sentiments are developed out of the still more primitive experiences of simple pleasure and pain. To both sets of critics we feel that some answer is owing, and we will try to supply it to the best of our power.

We will begin by considering the position of the last-named moralists, who propose to explain the formation of moral sentiments and judgments as a necessary consequence of simple experiences of pleasure and pain. For this school of moralists the fundamental assumption of ethics is the excessively simple one that some experiences are pleasant and some are painful. If you will grant them this assumption, they are prepared to show how the repetition of pleasant experiences is naturally sought and the repetition of painful experiences

avoided, and thus on the simplest possible psychological basis to account for the growth of all our elaborate codes of morality. The excessive simplicity of the theory is certainly a point in its favour, and it therefore becomes incumbent upon us to explain in what points our own account differs from it, and to justify the differences if we can.

First, then, a word as to the way in which the simplest sentiment of approval or disapproval differs from a feeling of pleasure or pain. The difference, it is clear, lies not in the affective or purely "feeling" side of the two experiences, but in the presentative (or representative) elements with which the feeling-tone is in either case combined. The cognitive or presentative side of approval and disapproval is decidedly more complex and belongs to a higher level of mental development than that of the mere pleasure or pain experience of the simplest kind. To constitute a pleasure or pain experience of the kind which, by repetition, engender, according to the Hedonistic psychology, all our more developed and complex moral sentiments, nothing is necessary beyond the immediate presence in consciousness of a sensational content with marked positive or negative feeling-tone. Pleasure and pain experiences of this kind are thus conceivably present in the very lowest and most rudimentary consciousnesses known to exist. The behaviour of such elementary organisms as even the *Infusoria*, so we are assured by competent observers,[1] is only to be explained by the supposition that their movements are expressive of strong likes and dislikes, otherwise, of experiences of pleasure and pain. But it should be clear that in such primitive forms of emotional life as these we have not yet any experiences which can properly be called by the name of approval and disapproval. Approval and disapproval belong to a more developed and reflective type of mental life than the simpler experiences of pleasure and pain; they imply the possession of "representative" mental images or "free" ideas. Approbation implies pleasure arising from the contemplation of some experience belonging to the past, or the expectation of some experience awaited in the future; disapprobation, similarly, implies pain arising from similar sources. It is not, even in the simpler cases, the immediately present of which we approve

[1] See Romanes, *Animal Intelligence*, chap. i.

or disapprove, but the immediately past or momentarily expected. In the simplest form to "approve" our present state is to contemplate its continuance with pleasure; to disapprove it is to view its continuance with displeasure. Of course it may be argued that even the simplest feeling of pleasure *as experienced by a human consciousness* involves some degree of such projection into the future, and is thus already at least implicitly a judgment of approval. This would be the basis of Nietzsche's saying that "Alle Lust will Ewigkeit."

Thus the cognitive element in the experiences of approbation and disapprobation is not a direct presentation or sensation, but a "re-presented" content or idea. To write the history of the evolution of these sentiments in their simplest form would be to write the history of the development of memory and expectation. We might, in fact, say that science and morality make their first appearance at the same level of psychical evolution, and are called into being by the same circumstances. Wherever you get the comparison of an idea with present reality, if the idea is condemned as nugatory you have the beginning of science; if the reality is condemned as falling short of the idea you have the beginnings of morality. As science begins in a disappointed expectation, so morality begins in dissatisfaction.

We can now explain both how far we can go with the psychologists who derive all the phenomena of the moral life from simple experiences of pleasure and pain, and where we part company with them. With the general doctrine that the simplest types of concrete mental process which are to be found in the life of the adult human being are the outcome of a long psycho-physical development we have no desire to quarrel; if it cannot be said to be proved, there is at least sufficient evidence of continuity in the world of psychical life to make it highly probable. Against the theory now under consideration of the particular lines along which the moral side of mental life has developed, we have, however, more than one serious objection to urge. In the first place, we cannot insist too strongly that what has developed in the course of the supposed evolution is not the affective, but the cognitive side of our emotional experiences. The pleasure accompanying the simplest sensational experience and the pleasure of memory or

expectation are *qua* pleasurable feeling identical in quality; a history of the evolution of one of these forms of experience from the other would therefore be a history not of the evolution of a new and more complicated affective or feeling-quality, but of the evolution of memory-images and representative ideas. The task which some psychologists have attempted to solve by a theory of the evolution of our sentiments from simple pleasures and pains of sense is really no less a task than the derivation from simple sensations of representative imagery and "ideation." The psychology which succeeds in explaining, without further assumptions, how the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation have been evolved out of mere experiences of pleasure and pain will, at the same time, have succeeded in explaining the evolution from merely sensational beginnings of memory and expectation.

It is this fact which constitutes the justification of our own selection of the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, in preference to the feelings of pleasure and pain, as the primary psychical facts which a theory of ethics must assume. However strongly convinced we may feel that memory, expectation, and free ideas, as they exist in the human adult psychical life, are the products of evolution and have a history behind them, we cannot avoid admitting (*a*) that in the present stage of our knowledge of child and animal psychology any attempt to write that history must be highly speculative, and ought therefore never to be allowed to influence our descriptions of the facts as discovered by analysis of the adult consciousness; and (*b*) that, if the history is ever written, the simple experiences from which these more complex modes of consciousness will be ultimately derived, will not be *mere* events in the way of pleasurably or painfully toned sensation. What *analogues* of human memory and expectation there may be in the mental life of a jelly-fish or an oyster we cannot of course say, but it is monstrous to assume without any evidence that there are none, simply because we are unable to say what they are.

Meanwhile, it seems manifest that if the mental life of the lowest organisms is nothing more than a succession of sensations, human mental life cannot properly be said to be continuous with theirs. Continuity would, in this case, belong not to the psychical but merely to the physical side of organic

life, and we should have to explain, *e.g.*, the appearance at a certain stage of evolution of "free ideas" by the supposition that a continuous physiological development may lead at a certain stage of its course to the appearance of new psychical phenomena which cannot be analysed into combinations of those which preceded them, and are therefore, properly speaking, neither derived from them nor continuous with them. The impossibility of passing, by mere combination of existing elements, from a *purely* sensational experience, devoid of memories and expectations, to an experience containing "ideas" seems so manifest as to force upon us one of two alternative conclusions. Either some rudimentary form of memory and ideation is characteristic of all mental life from the lowest to the highest, or else it is only by a convenient abuse of language that we speak of continuous mental evolution, the truth being that the continuity only exists on the physiological side.

Which of these alternatives is correct we cannot in the present state of our psychological knowledge say, and may perhaps never be able to say. But wherever the truth may lie, it would seem that, for the analysis of the moral life of a human individual or community, we must assume the existence of sentiments of approbation and disapprobation by the side of mere feelings of pleasure and pain, with exactly the same right and the same necessity as that by which modern scientific psychology assumes the existence, by the side of sensations, of memory-images and "free" ideas.[1] In both cases, for the purposes of psychological analysis, the more "developed" and complex form of psychical life must under one name or another appear as an ultimate and irreducible fact. It is only after the task of analysis has been satisfactorily performed that we are in a position to raise the question whether a comparison of the adult human mind with those of children and animals

[1] Nothing is more characteristic of recent psychology than its dissatisfaction with the tacit assumption of the old Associationist school that, given the existence of sensations, the existence of ideas can at once be explained by dubbing them "reproduced" sensations. I need hardly do more than refer the reader, on this point, to the *Psychologies* of Stout, Ebbinghaus, and H. Cornelius. The Wundtian school still cling to the old language about "reproduction," but they seem hardly to have realised the difficulties of the problem.

It is perhaps necessary to explain briefly just how much we understand in our discussion by an "idea," and the present seems the best opportunity for the explanation. By an "idea," then, we mean a mental state or content which is *used* as referring to or standing for some feature of perceptual experience not actually present

would enable us to trace the gradual formation of distinctions which, in the analysis of adult human minds, appear ultimate.

For these reasons I feel compelled to regard the somewhat complex phenomena of approbation and disapprobation as the simplest elements into which the moral experiences of adult human life can be analysed. Whether there are or are not in the infra-human world experiences of *mere* sense pleasure and pain untinged by memory or expectation, I am not called upon to decide; it is enough for our purposes that such *merely* sensuous experiences form no part of the human mental life with which we are concerned, and that in any case the bridge which leads from them to experiences in which we approve and disapprove is one which we are unable to construct. We content ourselves, then, with remaining on the right side of the chasm. The bridge, if ever it should be constructed, will have to be made, not by the distinctively moral philosopher, but by the student of general psychology. The demand for its construction is a demand not for the analysis of the moral sentiments into their simplest factors, but for the derivation of moral experience as a whole from experience which is as yet not moral. This task we may safely leave in the hands of the psychologist, precisely as æsthetic theory leaves it to the psychologist and the anthropologist to trace if they can the evolution from mere pleasure and pain experiences of the particular forms of emotion which it recognises as, properly speaking, æsthetic. For the analytical part of the derivative sciences, at least, both sets of emotions are ultimate facts.

We have now in principle, I trust, made good our case against critics who find our primary ethical assumptions too complicated. But before we go on to examine the views of some who will probably think those assumptions too simple, we may perhaps be allowed to call attention in passing to one

as such. The precise character of such states, considered in themselves and apart from their relation to absent perceptual experiences, *i.e.* their character as themselves experiences, is exceedingly difficult to determine, and a full discussion of the point is greatly needed. For our purposes, however, the important feature about the "idea" is the uses to which it is put, and we are thus not called upon to enter upon extraneous psychological discussion as to its character as a mental event. I may remark in conclusion that the test of the presence of "ideas" in the animals has to be sought in ability to adapt their movements in advance to *future* modifications of their environment. Where this power is present we may fairly say, not perhaps that the animal *has* ideas, but that it acts as if it had, and must be treated by psychology as if it had ideas.

confusion which has sometimes given the Hedonistic psychology of the cruder kind an appearance of more plausibility than it really possesses, and which has quite recently reappeared in the pages of so acute and generally discriminating a psychologist as H. Cornelius. In explanation of the supposed genesis of our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation out of a mere sequence of pleasurably and painfully toned sensations, we commonly find it stated that the "revival" or "reproduction" in idea of a sensation which has been found pleasurable or painful, includes in itself a "revived" image of the past pleasure or pain. We are said to have "ideas of" future or past pleasure and pain, exactly as we have "ideas of" future or past sensations of tone and colour. And it is then supposed to be self-evident that it is the remembered or imagined pleasure which leads us to the performance of actions fitted to secure the repetition of the pleasant experience. This supposed ideal revival and anticipation of pleasurable emotions is, as far as I know, the only evidence which has ever been offered in proof of the fundamental doctrine of the Hedonist psychology—the doctrine that pleasure is the only thing which is or can be desired. And it is, as we can easily see, evidence which rests on nothing better than a confusion. An appeal to introspection will show—at least such is its result in the case of the present writer—that it is impossible to have a representative image or idea of pleasure or pain. I find that, in the most careful examination I can make of my own mental state at the time of recollecting or anticipating pleasurable or painful experiences, I can in no way imagine or represent in idea the past or future feeling of pleasure or pain. I can succeed in more or less vividly calling up the ideas of the sights and sounds, etc., which were on a given occasion found pleasant or painful, but the pleasure or pain itself is gone completely without recall. Thus in trying to recollect as exactly as I can the sensations connected with a slight but painful operation, I succeed in obtaining images of the tactual sensations aroused by the lancet, but I can get no image of the pain that accompanied them. In fact, the only evidence that memory furnishes of the painfulness of the incision is my recollection of having made some remark on the subject to the surgeon immediately after the operation.

And in the same way, when I, as we commonly say, "anticipate a pleasure," introspection reveals to me the fact that I possess "ideas" of the various perceptions that I expect to receive, but shows me no trace whatever of an idea of the pleasure with which I infer from my knowledge of my own tastes that those perceptions will be accompanied. The pleasure or pain accompanying an anticipation or a memory is, in my case at any rate, no part whatever of what I anticipate or remember; it is present as actual feeling, not as revived or reinstated images of feeling. I have, in fact, neither anticipations nor recollections of pleasure or pain, but merely pleasurable and painful anticipations and recollections of events in the way of sensation and perception. I for my individual part, at any rate, can attach no meaning whatever to the phrase "a remembered pleasure" or "an anticipated pain." And, if one may judge by the emphasis laid in treatises on psychology upon the radical difference between presentation and feeling, the majority of psychologists seem to be in the same plight as myself.[1]

Nor would the plain man, I think, reject our conclusion if it were put before him in simple language, and contrasted with the extravagances of the alternative view. The plain man may talk conveniently but inaccurately of anticipated pleasure and pain, but he does not really believe that the mental sufferings of the prisoner in the condemned cell are the "anticipated pain" of the halter, or the rapture with which the tobacco-less wayfarer hails the distant prospect of a town the "anticipated pleasure" of his pipe. The fact which is confusedly and inaccurately expressed in popular language by this talk of remembered and anticipated pains and pleasure is,

[1] It may, however, be doubted whether the impossibility of having ideas of pleasure and pain of itself shows that feelings and presentations are absolutely heterogeneous. Most psychologists are, I believe, agreed that there can be no "ideal revival" of organic sensations. By the most painstaking attempts I have never succeeded in calling up in myself an ideal equivalent of an absent sensation of smell or taste. I could find *words* to describe such absent sensations, and I should recognise them again on their recurrence, but I am, as far as I can discover, utterly incapable of realising in imagination the smell of a rose or the taste of salt. From the utterances of the books on psychology, I am led to infer that this is an exceptional state of things, but in any case it serves to show that there are presentations which have no ideal equivalents. Is not my inability to imagine so very striking a sensation as the taste of salt also evidence in favour of the view that an idea is something generically different from a sensation, and not the sensation itself in a "weaker" form?

accurately expressed, this, that the ideal equivalents of sensational experiences of a pleasant or painful nature are commonly themselves also pleasant or painful according to the emotional quality of the original sensations. I say "commonly" and not "universally" in order to call attention to an argument put forward by H. Cornelius in defence of the existence of "ideas of" pleasure and pain. There must, he argues, be an emotional element in the case of a remembered pain or pleasure other than the actual feeling-tone at the moment of reminiscence. The memory of our past troubles is often extremely pleasant, and more than one great poet has stamped with his approval the saying of Boethius that *in omni adversitate fortunae infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem.* Cornelius holds, therefore, that in a case, *e.g.*, of pleasure derived from the memory of past suffering there must be present both the actual feeling of pleasure and an *ideal* equivalent of the old pain. And similarly in the more common case, where the memory or anticipation of pain is itself painful, he would distinguish the actual present feeling from the ideal presentment of the expected feeling, thus disagreeing *in toto* with ourselves, according to whom the actual present feeling is the only emotional element in the case.

Surely, however, this argument of Cornelius' is based upon an inaccurate usage of language, which is exceptional in so careful a writer. What is actually remembered of past trouble is not the feelings of pain, but the sensations and ideas which were found painful. The events I recollect directly, and by remembering the extravagant things that I said and did at the time, I come indirectly by the knowledge that those events were painful. Thus I may recollect trying, under the pressure of some great misfortune, to make away with myself, and may thus mediately know how extreme must have been the pain that I endured; but the pain itself suffers no "ideal recall." The only emotional accompaniments of the recollection of my attempted suicide will be those actually present feelings which arise out of the mutual reaction between the ideas involved in the recollection and the rest of the contents of my experience at the moment of recollecting, and these feelings may perfectly well, if my present position is one of freedom from all anxieties, be, as Cornelius says, eminently pleasurable. He is

only wrong because he supposes our knowledge of the past state of our emotions, which is always, as we have seen, second-hand and indirect, to be matter of immediate perception, and to be given in the "ideas" of the events we are remembering.[1]

It is this impossibility of reviving "in idea" our perished feelings which makes it so much easier for us to be mistaken in our accounts of our past emotions than in our accounts of the events with which they were connected. Not all men, probably not most men, who attempt to persuade their neighbours that they have all along approved of some venture which they have really done their utmost to discourage so long as its success was doubtful, are consciously insincere. In the absence of ideal equivalents of the old sentiments of distrust, it is indeed the most natural thing in the world to assume that what fills us now with satisfaction and exultation must always have had the same effect. How indeed should any man, other than a psychologist, suspect the opposite?

The bearing of these considerations upon the views of ethics we have been criticising is twofold. On the one hand, our inquiry into the emotional attendants of the "ideal revival" of experiences in the way of sensation throws a curious light on the assumptions of that kind of psychology which regards it as self-evident that sensations should reappear, with all their peculiarities, in a somewhat less "vivid" form as "ideas." We have seen already that one important characteristic of sensational experience, its feeling-tone, does not reappear at all in the corresponding "ideas," which have regularly a feeling-tone of their own, depending upon circumstances among which the possession by the original sensational experiences of a special feeling-tone is only one. This result may reasonably lead us to question the whole psychological theory according to which "ideas" are simply "revived" or "recalled" sensations, and may thus serve to confirm us in our original refusal to include in our analysis of the ethical sentiments an hypothetical evolution of sentiments, including an ideal element, from merely sensational experiences.[2]

[1] For a final exposure of the fallacious character of the Hedonist assumption see chap. vi.

[2] It would be an excellent reform in psychology to disuse, at least until the relation of ideas to sensations has been subjected to much more examination than it has as yet received, all the customary phrases about the ideal "recall," "revival,"

The bearing of our conclusion upon the Hedonist psychology of moral action is still more patent. If there are, strictly speaking, no such things as "ideas" of pleasure or pain, the whole foundation of the old theory according to which anticipated pleasure and pain are the only incentives to action is dissolved at a single blow. For the one quality of a series of future experiences which, upon our showing, cannot be properly "anticipated" is the pleasurable or painful feeling with which they will be accompanied. These feelings can at best be known mediately and symbolically on the basis of inference from past experience, and it remains, therefore, for the psychologist who proposes to defend the proposition that "desire for pleasure" is the incentive to all our actions to show that the only ideas by which the will can be influenced are the mediate and symbolic ideas (consisting probably for the most part of ideal representations of movements expressive of emotion) involved in the knowledge that certain experiences will be pleasant. No proposition, to say the least of it, can be less self-evident than this, or less plausible. The secret of the apparent plausibility of psychological Hedonism lies in the confusion between the imaginary "anticipated pleasure" and the real pleasantness of the anticipation. It is tacitly assumed that the only anticipations which can be pleasant are anticipations of future pleasure, which is much as if one were, in the teeth of experience, to say, "No reminiscences can be painful but reminiscences of past pain."

Now that we can see that the true incentive to voluntary action is not the anticipation of pleasure, but the pleasurable anticipation of sensations and ideas, we find ourselves at once free from all those puzzles about the possibility of disinterested and unselfish action which Hedonism has always had to solve by various cumbrous and improbable psychological devices. We are no more called upon, for instance, to prove that a martyr will increase his sum of pleasures by being burned

"reproduction," etc., of sensations. In view of the powerful arguments which go to show that an "idea" is not a revived sensation at all, but a new psychic growth, it would be more accurate to speak simply of "ideal equivalents" of sensation, meaning no more by the phrase than that certain ideas represent for us in memory past experiences of a sensational kind in a way which at present remains for us an ultimate psychological fact. The older language is customary, and consequently convenient, but we should be careful, if we use it, to remember that it implies an hypothesis which is not altogether satisfactory.

than we are called on to show that because it is pleasant now to recollect a past danger it must have been pleasant to experience it at the time. Similarly, by this simple psychological distinction we avoid once and for all the supposed necessity of finding an egoistic origin for social sentiments. We obtain a basis for ethics which is as yet, and in its primitive form, neither definitely egoistic nor definitely "altruistic," and thus provides for that divergent development in the two opposing directions, the course of which we shall have to trace in subsequent chapters. Pleasure arising from the anticipation of certain experiences in the way of sensations and ideas is as such neither egoistic nor altruistic, but may be either, according to the character of the ideas and sensations anticipated. In short, we get rid finally of two most pernicious psychological prejudices. One of them is that "all desire is desire for pleasure," the other that "all desire for pleasure is primarily desire for my own pleasure." Of these two propositions the first is, as we have seen, commonly advanced without a particle of proof, as if it were a self-luminous truth; the second, as we shall see later on in the next section, does not even follow with any necessity from the other.[1] So frail is the logical structure of psychological Hedonism.[2]

Our answer to the other class of critics whose views we promised to consider will perhaps take us a step or two further towards the construction of a theory of the more complex phenomena of the moral life. These critics, it will be remembered, we supposed to complain that we omitted from our primary ethical assumption the concepts of "obligation," "duty," "responsibility," and, we may add, "free personality."

[1] That the second of these propositions is a necessary consequence of the first is frequently assumed by the defenders, and I believe always by the assailants, of Hedonism. In my undergraduate days at Oxford I used to hear the argument, "A desire for some other person's pleasure is not a desire for pleasure," brought forward as in itself an unanswerable refutation of Hedonistic views. H. Cornelius is the only writer with whose works I am acquainted who has openly traversed it (*Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft*, p. 374), but I hope to show later on that he is right.

[2] Psychological Hedonism must be carefully distinguished from the strictly ethical Hedonism which, without committing itself to the psychological theory just criticised, merely maintains that, as a matter of fact, the "good" and the "pleasant" so far coincide that the pleasantness of a mode of life may be taken as an indication of its moral rightness. For this view, properly qualified, there is after all a good deal to be said, in spite of the severe and frequently unjustifiable assaults which have been made upon it by both Intuitionists and self-realisation moralists. We shall deal with its merits and defects in a later chapter on pleasure.

From the point of view of not a few of our most famous philosophers, a system of ethics that does not begin by postulating one or more of these concepts as an ultimate reality is not ethics at all, and, unless we can justify our procedure, we must therefore be content to sit down under the very imputation which we have ourselves brought against the Hedonist psychologists—the imputation of basing our ethics upon a psychological analysis which ignores the peculiar character of the ethical side of life. Let us see, then, how far we can defend ourselves against certain strictures which are sure to be passed upon us by the moralists of the Kantian as well as of the Intuitionist type.

Our answer to the charge of having ignored the primary importance for ethics of the concepts of obligation, duty, responsibility, and free personality, will partake of the same double character as our whole argument against the subordination of ethics to metaphysics. In the first place, we contend, on general methodological principles, that none of these concepts possesses the characteristics requisite in an original scientific postulate. As we have already seen, the theories involved in the first assumptions of a science should be of that simple and "pre-scientific" kind which are insensibly and inevitably suggested by the course of direct experience; all the later elaborate and artificial hypotheses of science are no more than successive modifications of these primary theories called forth by the discovery of new factors in experience. Now the hypotheses represented by the concepts which are at present in question are unmistakably complex and highly elaborated. Some of them,—as, for instance, those connected with the notion of "free personality,"—belong to that most artificial and elaborate body of reflections upon our own hypotheses which we call "metaphysics"; all of them, in so far as they are concerned with the description of psychological facts, describe facts which are far from simple in their nature, and which admit, in some cases, of more than one interpretation. For these reasons we think we are justified in refusing on grounds of general method to begin our survey of ethical facts by taking for granted some elaborate theory of such complicated psychological phenomena as the sense of duty or the sense of responsibility.

But further, we propose to defend our view by presenting the reader with a sketch of the way in which, if our general theory about the elementary character of the moral sentiments is correct, the more complicated phenomena described by the names of responsibility, obligation, etc., come into being. We propose, that is, to justify our assertion that the mental states described by these names are capable of analysis into simple elements, by writing what we think, in its main outlines, a probable history of their growth. The primary ethical fact is, we have said, that something is approved or disapproved; that is, in other words, the ideal representation of certain events in the way of sensation, perception, or idea, is attended with a feeling of pleasure or of pain. All attempts to get behind this primary fact seem to take us at once out of the region of strictly ethical sentiment, and moreover to give us none but highly hypothetical results. We may, for instance, try to simplify matters still further by the hypothesis that experiences the ideal equivalents of which give pleasure have previously themselves been found pleasurable in their original sensational form, and similarly that those of which the idea is painful have themselves been originally attended with pain; but this proposition, plausible as it sounds, is after all only a statement of what is customarily experienced, not a universal psychological law. The quality of the emotion attending a memory or an anticipation depends, as we have already seen, as much upon the character of our present psychical state as upon the original emotional accompaniments of the experience now remembered or anticipated. Hence, while admitting the fact that the anticipation of experiences identical with those that have in the past been pleasant or painful is commonly itself of the same emotional tone, we have also to admit that there are many exceptions to this apparent law, and that it consequently is in no sense an explanation of the phenomenon it partially describes. For us the fact that the anticipation of certain experiences is pleasant or painful must, then, be an ultimate assumption incapable of further explanation, at any rate until the existence of ideas and the connection between their emotional quality and that of the corresponding sensation-experiences have received from the psychologists an elucidation which at present is entirely wanting.

Strictly speaking, we are altogether unable to say why the anticipation of a certain experience is pleasant and that of another painful. We can only say that (1) the emotional tone which has accompanied that kind of experience in the past and (2) the general character of our present mental state are both concerned in producing the result. A complete theory would only be possible if we possessed an insight into the emotional consequences of the "apperception" of one idea by others such as are at present utterly beyond our powers. Hence for the present we have to be content with *mere* probabilities, mere loose generalities, which we know to admit of exception, though we are absolutely without the means of computing the extent of the "probable error" which they contain. In practice it is *never* safe to argue that a man will be pleased by the prospect of renewing an experience which has in the past given him pleasure, unless you have reason to believe that there has been no serious alteration in his general psycho-physical condition. The readiness shown by many writers to assume as an obvious truth that what has been pleasant in experience must also be pleasant in idea or in anticipation is probably due to their forgetting that emotional tone never belongs to a single sensation or idea, but to the whole content of consciousness as affected by the appearance of the sensation or idea. It should never be forgotten that in speaking of the pleasurable or painful character of a particular sensation or idea we are indulging in exactly the same abstracting process as when we describe an explosion as due to the lighting of the fuse. It is as convenient and as inaccurate to talk of the pleasure-pain value of a single psychical process, apart from those which it apperceives and is apperceived by, as it would be to speak as if the lighting of the fuse would always explode the mine, independently of the moistness or dryness of the charge.

Setting on one side, then, as unfruitful all attempts to get behind the facts which we have described as those of approbation and disapprobation, let us raise the question whether the existence of these facts is not enough—given of course the general physical and social conditions of human life—to account for the development of the sense of responsibility and obligation, and of the concept of myself as a free moral personality. In

our attempt to answer this question we may perhaps discover fresh confirmation of our view about the impossibility of creating such an ultimately self-consistent body of ethical theory as we have a right to expect if ethics really rests upon previously ascertained metaphysical truth.

The first point to which we must call attention in our sketch of moral development is that the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation in their simplest form are, as we have said, neither egoistic nor yet altruistic, but, in the fullest sense of the word, impersonal. We must, in fact, in dealing with the very simplest forms in which the ethical judgment makes its appearance, take care to avoid vitiating our description of facts by introducing a distinction which has no real existence except in mental life of a highly developed and reflective type, and even there plays a much less important part than is frequently supposed. The tendency to read into our accounts of the most primitive forms of feeling and action sentiments which we find in ourselves and the other highly civilised persons who form the society in which we live, is so inveterate, and derives such powerful support from the necessity of describing the first rude beginnings of mental life in a language which is the latest outcome of centuries of development, that, without special care, it will be almost impossible for us not to fall into one of the mutually exclusive forms of the "psychologists' fallacy." On the one hand, it is, as we have seen, natural to assume that the earliest ideas to be "approved" are those which represent experiences which have in the past proved pleasant, and it is an easy step from this premise to the conclusion that the ethical sentiments and judgments of a child or a primitive man have reference exclusively to pleasures and pains consciously anticipated *as* his own, and are therefore egoistic. On the other hand, if we reflect upon the all-importance of the tribe and the insignificance of the individual in early society, if we remember the part that tribal opinion has manifestly had in forming the first crude unreflective customary morality of primitive races, and the similar part played to this day by the approval or disapproval of "elders" in giving a child its earliest notions of right and wrong, and if we further fortify ourselves by an appeal to the general theory of the conditions of organic

evolution, we are irresistibly tempted to conclude that the primary ethical sentiments of approval and disapproval have reference, not to the pleasures and pains of the individual, but to those of his community,—in a word, that they are from the very first *altruistic* or *social* in their character.

As a matter of philosophical history, this difference of opinion in ethics has perhaps commonly gone hand in hand with a more general difference in scientific outlook. Moralists who have consciously or unconsciously been primarily influenced by psychological considerations have mostly leaned to the egoistic view. On this side of the question we have, for instance, Aristotle (who scarcely recognises self-sacrificing emotion at all, except in the case of voluntary exposure to the risks of war from patriotic reasons), Spinoza, the whole body of psychological Hedonists, and, as I think one may fairly say, the school of Professor Green. These last, it is true, would probably disclaim the title of psychological moralists, but as is only natural for philosophers who begin their theory of ethics with a doctrine of the "Self," they are at least so far egoists that they seem to think it necessary to defend self-sacrifice by the contention that it is really always disguised self-satisfaction.[1]

On the other hand, thinkers who approach ethics from the side of evolutionary biology tend with emphasis to identify morality with altruism, and to deny the moral value of self-regarding action, except in so far as it indirectly influences society. Thus while Hume and his followers have sought to account for all altruistic and "disinterested" sentiments as secondary consequences of the primary egoistic feelings, it is now not uncommon to meet both in literature and in conversation with the conviction that the egoistic sentiments are themselves secondary reflections in the consciousness of the individual of the estimate set by the community to which he belongs upon himself and his performances. In what is now to follow we shall try to show that both these opposing views are equally devoid of foundation in fact, and we shall thus, by showing that the ethical sentiments are originally neither

[1] As if it could not be shown by precisely the same kind of consideration and with the same cogency that all self-realisation is masked self-surrender. "If I lose myself I find myself," you say, but do not forget that if I find myself I lose myself.

egoistic nor altruistic, prepare the way for the investigations of later chapters, in which we hope to prove that egoism and altruism are both divergent developments from a common psychological origin, neither of which can satisfactorily be treated as a comprehensive expression of the complete facts of the moral life. As we shall by and by see, it is one form of the irreconcilable duality that besets the moral life that morality is exhausted neither by altruism nor by egoism; both have their just claims upon our recognition, and yet, though we can easily trace the growth of both from one and the same psychological origin, we are absolutely without the means of adjusting their rival demands. This, however, more properly belongs to the chapters which are yet to follow dealing with "types of virtue" and "the goal of ethics." For the present we confine ourselves to our immediate subject, the early stages in the development of the ethical judgment.

The ethical sentiments and the judgments which express them, we have said, are in their most primitive form neither egoistic nor altruistic, but impersonal. The reasons for making this assertion will at once be apparent. As we have seen, an ethical judgment of the most primitive kind requires for its formation nothing beyond the recognition that the anticipation of certain experiences is pleasant or painful. To say that I approve such and such an action or quality is, in fact, to say that when I imagine its entrance into the course of my future experience my state of mind is a pleasant one; to say that I disapprove it means that when I imagine it as forming part of the future course of experience, my state of mind is a painful one. To repeat what I have said before, wherever you get the contrast between experience as it is and experience as it might be if a certain idea were "realised," and an accompanying feeling of pleasure or pain, you have the rudiments out of which our mature moral judgments have been built up. Even in so primitive a phenomenon as the sulky dissatisfaction of the savage who has failed to bring down his prey or to tomahawk his enemy you have unmistakably an experience which proclaims its kinship with the more complicated conditions which civilised men know as "remorse" and "shame," just as in the naïve glee of the savage who has boomeranged his wild duck or scalped his enemy you have the first dawnings

of what civilised men call the sense of conscious merit or the applause of a virtuous conscience.[1]

Now it is manifest that all the psychological conditions requisite for the formation of such sentiments as these are: (1) the possession of ideas which are felt in some way, which for our present psychological analysis is ultimate and indescribable, to be different from the sense-experiences which they represent; (2) the ability in some rudimentary way to distinguish between past and future;[2] and (3) the capability of being pleasurably or painfully affected by the contrast between our actual experiences and those we anticipate or remember. Wherever you have a level of psychical life at which there exist ideas, memory and expectation, pleasure and pain, you have a consciousness sufficiently developed to feel approbation and disapprobation when the actual content of its sensational experiences is coloured by contrast with its memories and its anticipations.

But it is also evident that with the presence of this amount of mental development you have not necessarily got the conditions requisite for the definite recognition on the part of the experiencing subject of itself as one among a number of mutually exclusive selves. Such a degree of complexity and continuity of mental life as we have postulated as necessary to the formation of the first inchoate judgments of approbation and disapprobation is as yet very far from amounting to that sense of my own stable identity and that discrimination of "Me" from "You" that is implied in speaking about the consciousness of "self."[3] As we have

[1] See the important footnote in Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, p. 431 (ed. 1).

[2] Perhaps one should rather say "before and after." It may be fairly regarded as established that the time-consciousness begins with this distinction of before and after *within* a continuous present (S. Hodgson, *Metaphysic of Experience*, vol. i. chaps. ii. and iii.).

[3] Though as a matter of fact such a distinction must have been reached very early in the history of intelligence. To the psychologist it is interesting to observe that in quite a number of more or less rude idioms (Ainu, Eskimo, Quichua, Guarani, Kiriri) there appear to be personal pronouns only for the first and second persons, the third, as subject of a sentence, being expressed by a noun or a demonstrative. This looks as if the distinction between "you" and "me" preceded that between both of us and "him" or "them." Yet the further step of recognising the relation of the third party to the other two cannot require great intellectual development, for the full series of three pronouns, all personal, already meets us in the Australian dialects. The Paniquita and Aimara dialects of South America, of which the former has the same form in the singular for the first and second, and the latter the same form both in singular and plural (providing only a different expression for the first plural when it includes the person addressed) are, one would expect, unique. For the facts see F. Müller, *Grundriss der Sprachwissenschaft*, vol. ii. pt. i.

already seen, the most primitive experiences are not at first marked by the distinction between subject and object. It is only as a result of a long course of experiences, by which my own body is gradually marked off from the objects surrounding it, that "I" become known to myself as a subject at all. While these experiences are yet being made, it cannot properly be said that the contents of my experience are in the full sense "mine," for as yet there is no "Me"; I exist as yet as a self only for the observation of other persons, and to them I am not "Me," but "Him." And it can hardly be doubted that among the experiences which precede the consciousness of myself as a "Me" there are already many of the type which we have recognised as the first beginnings of moral sentiments. Careful observers of the development of the infant mind, such as Professor Baldwin, have succeeded in detecting signs of rudimentary emotions of an unmistakably ethical kind, such as pride and shame, at a stage at which it seems clear that the child has not yet come to the consciousness of himself as a person in a world of persons. Indeed it may safely be said that it is very largely through experience of our own judgments of approval and disapproval of the conduct of others, and theirs of our own, that we come by the recognition of ourselves as persons in a society of persons. The distinction between myself and other selves, like the distinction between myself and the world, is not a formal presupposition of experiences, but a "pre-scientific" hypothesis created by experience, and among the experiences which have contributed to its formation those of an ethical kind are not the least prominent. Full and complete moral personality is not the beginning but the end of moral development; it is by progress in morality that we ultimately become really persons.

To apply all this to the controversy between egoism and altruism, we may say that, strictly speaking, the original approvals and disapprovals from which the moral judgment springs are as yet neither egoistic nor altruistic. It is not, until a sufficient level of reflection has been attained, for the approving or disapproving consciousness to distinguish between the anticipation of pleasure-bringing experiences for itself and for others that these distinctions, so closely connected with the complex thinking and acting of the civilised adult, can be

said to be founded upon a sound psychological basis. Before this stage of development is reached, we have in the primitive mind of the child, and presumably of the uncivilised man, to do with approvals and disapprovals which, on their cognitive side, consist of anticipations or memories of experiences not yet distinguished as belonging to a peculiar self or person. Hence the earliest sentiments of approval and disapproval may properly be said to be as yet impersonal, and therefore neither selfish nor the reverse.

One may still, I think, trace something of this impersonal approval and disapproval in the expressions with which a child of tender years will follow the fortunes of Jack the Giant Killer or Cinderella. If you tell the story of Cinderella to a very young child, taking care to expatiate in detail upon the glories of the heroine's appearance in her ball-dress or at her wedding, and then close your description with some such question as "Wasn't that nice, now?" you are almost certain to call forth from your auditor all the signs of rapturous approbation. In a person of mature years such an appreciation of the pleasurable experiences of some one else might plausibly be said to be the secondary product of "sympathetic" feeling aroused by "putting himself in the heroine's place." But when your auditor is a child of three, it hardly seems reasonable to introduce so sophisticated an explanation. It seems more natural to suppose that, in the childish mind, for which the limits which separate self from other selves must as yet be much less prominent than they become in after life, the idea of the experiences described in the story directly calls forth feelings of pleasure, and is consequently approved without any necessity for the experiences described to be recognised as those of "some one else." If this be so, we have clearly to do with a stage of mental development at which the beginnings of ethical feeling and judgment already exist before the distinction between myself and other selves has acquired the significance which it has for later life, and we thus seem to have, in the behaviour of quite young children, a refutation of the popular anti-Hedonist argument that a desire for pleasure must always be a desire for *my own* pleasure.

If our conception of the facts of primitive mental life be

correct, then, morality begins with a state of sentiment which is as yet neither egoistic nor altruistic, or, to use the technical language of the older psychologists, with desires which are as yet simply desires of certain experiences, not desires of those experiences for myself or for another. Yet when we come to examine the experiences which are actually anticipated with pleasure, we may trace in them, even in the earliest stages of mental development, the foundation of the future distinction between egoistic and altruistic action and sentiment. Even in the infra-human world we may see an *analogue* of this distinction in the broad difference between the instincts which make for the self-preservation and well-being of the individual animal, and those which make, at the cost of pain, privation, and even death to the individual, for the production and preservation of the coming generation. Instincts as such are of course yet neither egoistic nor altruistic, but at the same time the existence in the human or in all other species of the great broad distinction between the two classes of instinctive acts is the indispensable natural or pre-ethical basis requisite for the later development of moral sentiment along the two diverging lines of egoism and altruism.

For it is, of course, clear that when, with the emergence into consciousness of the distinction between idea and actual sensitive experience, the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation first make their appearance, the experiences anticipated with pleasure and with pain will be those which respectively arise from the discharge and the suppression of natural instinctive action. This is ensured by the fact that even where the discharge of instinctive action ultimately leads to painful consequences for the individual, as when the mother-bird dies in defence of her nest, the experiences attending the earlier stages of the instinctive action are presumably more or less pleasant and those attending its forcible repression certainly painful, as also by the fact that the past pleasurableness or painfulness of an experience is one determining condition, though not the only condition, of the pleasurableness or painfulness of its ideal representative. We can thus see how nature, by the very clash of instincts arising from the double position of an individual animal as an integral component of the existing generation and an instrument for

calling into being the coming generation of its species, prepares the way for the future conflict between the ethical ideals of self-realisation and self-sacrifice in the cause of the family, the state, society, or humanity.[1]

We can also see how the way is prepared by the construction of our psychical mechanism for the suppression and thwarting of original instincts of either kind, and the consequent growth of an extravagant self-abnegation or an equally extravagant selfishness. An animal devoid of the first beginnings of the "ideal" form of psychical life, and consequently without memory and expectation, would be capable of neither of these opposed forms of moral perversion. In the absence of any remembrance or anticipation of the painful consequences of a certain course of instinctive action, the present pleasantness of the instinctive discharge or the painfulness of its inhibition would with a mechanical fatality bring about the performance of the acts requisite, for instance, to the production and protection of the coming generation, at whatever cost to the parent animal. But with the acquisition of ideas and the ideal types of experience, memory, and expectation, it becomes possible in such a case for the recollection of previous consequences of the instinctive performances to reverse the feeling-tone originally connected with its discharge. The action, each successive stage of which, except the last, was previously attended with pleasure, may now be anticipated with pain and consequently disapproved; the repetition of this sequence, once hardening into habit, may then lead to the complete suppression of such instinctive actions as originally secured the well-being of the coming at the expense of the existing generation. Or, in the same way, experience of the effects produced in other members of the family by an originally instinctive act of self-preservation may, by causing an emotional reversal, lead to the suppression of an instinct by which the adult animal was originally preserved at the cost of its young.

Thus from beginnings which, without being themselves either egoistic or altruistic, contain the physical conditions

[1] It is, however, not only in the *reproductive* instinct that we meet with a forecast of the "social" side of morality. The same is true of every instinct which leads to the performance of concerted and co-ordinate action by a group, *e.g.* the hunting of dogs.

of the development of both egoism and altruism, may arise through the ordinary workings of the psychological mechanism extreme types of life and conduct in which either form of moral action and feeling is all but utterly suppressed by the other. Such extreme types of one-sided development are, however, distinctly abnormal, and deserve to hold much the same place in the moralist's estimate of human character as "freaks" do in the naturalist's account of the physical world. In most men the two lines of moral development may probably be said to be about equally represented; our ordinary moral judgments have to be distorted and misrepresented in about an equal degree by those who wish to make them altogether an affair of self-realisation, and by those who can see in them nothing but the expression of sentiments of self-abnegation.[1] Throughout the development of morality from its crudest beginnings to its highest culmination in the ethical and religious convictions of the best members of civilised society, we can trace precisely the same conflict of self-regarding and self-denying action as is prefigured in the non-moral world by the conflict between instincts which minister directly to the well-being of the adult animal and instincts which, at the cost of the adult, secure the protection of the yet immature generation, or that of the pack at the cost of the individual.

It will not be forgotten that we have already in our first chapter appealed to this dependence of morality upon the peculiar character of the animal instincts connected with our position as members of a species possessed of a special physiological organisation and developed under special physical conditions, to show the hopelessness of all attempts to construct a single ethical system for all "rational" beings. We have only to imagine to ourselves the existence of a community of intelligent creatures who, like the angels in heaven, neither marry nor are given in marriage, to realise how

[1] I may possibly be criticised for employing the much-decried term "altruism" as the counterpart to "egoism." I do not, of course, mean to suggest by my adoption of the term that a normal act of social beneficence may not also be at the same time an act of self-cultivation. I do, however, mean to suggest that you cannot *always* promote your own "good" by promoting that of society, or advance the interests of society best by attending to self-culture. In a word, I mean to suggest the reality, on any intelligible theory of morality, of a self-sacrifice which is more than self-discipline.

completely the alteration of some of the physiological or even purely physical conditions of life would revolutionise ethics by changing the whole character of the conditions which determine the lines of demarcation between myself and others, and between the egoistic and the altruistic ethical developments.[1]

There is one point in the preceding discussion which is still, perhaps, in need of a word of explanation. We have more than once spoken of the "conflict" between two classes of instinct and two types of moral sentiment. Our language on this topic must not, of course, be understood to imply that every instinctive and every moral action must be either purely self-regarding or purely self-abnegatory. As a matter of fact, it is only in a certain minority of cases that the "conflict" has any existence. For the most part both instinctive and moral actions are at once beneficial to the individual and to the species. It is, of course, as necessary for the permanent existence of a species that the present adult generation should find adequate nourishment, and should be able to defend themselves successfully against their rivals in the struggle for life, as it is that the unborn or immature young should be fed and defended. And in the world of intelligent agents it is as necessary for the good of society that a man should make the best he can of himself as that he should assist his fellows to do the same. Hence, for the most part, the discharge of those instinctive actions which tend to the reproduction of the species and the nurture of the young is attended with pleasure to the individual performing them, and hence also in benefiting his fellows a man most often benefits himself, and *vice versa*. The object of our language about the conflict of instincts and of moral sentiments, was not to minimise the significance of so obvious a fact, but simply to insist that the harmony between the two sets of instincts or sentiments has its limits, and that we possess no general principle which would enable us to say that either set has a right to be regarded as more primary or more important than the other. To us it seems, indeed, no

[1] For instance, among the beings who, according to Mignon's song in *Wilhelm Meister*, "Fragen nicht nach Mann und Weib," sexual jealousy would be non-existent, and to what modifications of social arrangements would not this single circumstance give rise?

less sophistical to insist that the voluntary surrender of life on the field of battle is properly an act of self-realisation, than it would be to declare that the behaviour of the female bird who faces death in defence of her brood is an illustration of the strength of the self-preservative instincts. From first to last, from the lowest levels of instinctive to the most inaccessible heights of moral action, the conditions of life imposed upon the individual by the fact that he is at once a member and an instrument of his species, involve the constant possibility of conflicts which it seems impossible to obviate by any appeal to general principles. We shall have something to say about the features of this conflict between egoism and altruism, as it appears in the moral sentiments and practice of civilised mankind, in our chapters upon "The Types of Virtue" and on "The Goal of Ethics."

If the foregoing considerations are correct, we shall be justified in refusing to accept both the theory which resolves all morality into a cruder or more refined self-seeking, and the rival theory which regards it as essentially a matter of altruistic and "social" sentiment. We have been led to recognise, as present in the earliest and most inarticulate judgments of approbation and disapprobation, not, indeed, the full-blown sentiments of egoism and altruism, but the conditions requisite for the subsequent development of both. The existence in the primitive being of both self-preservative and reproductive and social instincts makes it inevitable that among the qualities and accomplishments approved of, even by the savage, there should be some which are more particularly productive of pleasurable experiences to their possessor, and others productive of pleasurable experiences to his family and his tribe, even at the expense of pain to himself. To write the further history of the growth of conscious self-seeking and self-denial would be to describe the gradual development of the concept of personality under the influences of family and tribal relations. The various influences of a social kind which assist the formation of this concept have frequently been so well described by psychologists and anthropologists that we may be excused from giving a detailed account of them in this place.

There is one misconception, however, which is so natural,

and is so often committed, that it may be as well to put the reader on his guard against it before we go any further. Great stress has very properly been laid of late years, by students of comparative morality, upon the important influence exercised first by tribal, and then by social opinion upon the formation of the individual's judgments of approbation and disapprobation and accompanying sentiments of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with his own conduct. Considered from the right point of view, indeed, the significance of tribal and social opinion for the growth of a personal morality can hardly be exaggerated. For the tribal or social opinion is naturally the great moral educator of mankind, and that in more ways than one. Not only does social opinion affect our own sentiments towards certain modes of behaviour by attaching to them rewards and punishments of a physical kind: it controls them still more effectually in virtue of that peculiarity of our physical and mental constitution, called sometimes by the name of "suggestion," sometimes by that of "sympathy," by which the physical expression of emotion on the part of other members of our species directly creates the corresponding expression, and with it the corresponding emotion, on our own part. In particular, the fact that it is from the older members of our own tribe or community that we have to borrow the very language in which to express our personal emotions and sentiments is of itself enough to invest tribal and social opinion with an almost omnipotent control over the formation of the moral sentiments and judgments of the individual.

These facts, however, are sometimes distorted into an argument for the extreme altruistic theory of ethics, according to which the only acts to which the specifically moral sentiments attach are acts of social service. It is assumed, rightly enough, that in general what the individual approves or disapproves will be what his society has previously approved or disapproved. It is further assumed, as I think falsely and unwarrantably, that what society approves must in the first place be only qualities and actions directly *serviceable* to itself as a whole. Hence, it is contended, morality from its very first appearance must, as a natural consequence of its dependence upon social opinion, consist entirely of conduct of

an exclusively social and "altruistic" kind. As an illustration of this contention it is frequently added that for a man cast like Robinson Crusoe on a desolate island, with no probability of escape, there could be no such thing as a moral obligation, because he would no longer have a community to serve. In the absence of any fellow-creatures on whom his behaviour might have pleasant or unpleasant effects, it would be neither more nor less moral for him to drink himself to death with the rum recovered from his shipwreck than to order his life on a sober, industrious, and religious model. Such, at least, is the doctrine of the extreme altruists.

The illegitimate character of these inferences will already be in part apparent, and the following reflections may serve to make it yet more manifest. The assumption upon which this specious but fallacious defence of the extreme altruistic position is based contains more than one element of psychological error. It is, to begin with, untrue that that which a society or individual approves is in the first instance the "beneficial" as such. Of course the primitive and instinctive likes or dislikes of any species or individual must, in a general way, correspond to the necessities of its position; a species which had no instinctive pleasure in the experiences which are connected with self-preservation and reproduction, and no instinctive shrinking from situations hostile to its continued existence, would speedily die out. But from the point of view of the psychologist, who is concerned with the facts as they exist in the experience of the species or individual itself, and not as they appear to the scientific outside observer, the primary object of approbation and disapprobation, on the part of individual or species, is emphatically not the "beneficial" or the "life-preserving" as such. In spite of all that we have said against the Hedonist psychology, it would be a less serious mistake to say that experience-contents are approved because they are pleasant, than to say that they are approved because they are beneficial. For, as we have seen, the fact that an experience has been found pleasant has a great deal to do with causing the anticipation of its renewal to be pleasant; the mere fact that the experience is connected with circumstances that make for continuance of existence would of itself have no power to cause it to be approved or

desired, were not continued existence, as a rule, pleasant. For the psychologist the all-important fact is the pleasantness; the connection of the pleasant with the beneficial, like its connection with the "useful," for him needs to be established by a synthetic judgment. Thus neither society nor the individual is restricted in its sentiments of approbation to qualities and properties known to be beneficial in the sense of being serviceable in securing continued existence. For ethics and psychology the ultimate fact is that certain qualities and properties are approved; it is for another science to investigate the general dependence of the instinctive likes and dislikes upon which approbation and disapprobation are founded on the conditions of organic existence.

The question which altruism is bound to answer thus takes the following form:—Among the qualities which are directly and immediately approved by the tribe or society, are there any which have a value for their individual possessor independent of the services which they enable him to render to the community to which he belongs? If this question be answered in the affirmative, the purely altruistic position has been *ipso facto* abandoned. And it is fairly evident that the most natural answer to the question is the affirmative one. In the existence among even the most primitive of people of a standard of taste—that is, of an admiration for certain physical decorations conveying no special suggestion of health or muscular strength, we have striking evidence that the approbation of the primitive tribe was not bestowed solely upon qualities directly serviceable to its tribal interests. It is because primitive people have the standard of taste that the possession of a number of ornaments answering to that standard may become "beneficial" to the tribe, and not *vice versa*. And though strength, courage, and eloquence are all of them directly serviceable to the community, it seems unreasonable to deny that there is more in the popular admiration for a successful hunter or an eloquent speaker than the recognition of the useful services which his physical or mental endowments may perform to the community. If our view as to the "impersonal" nature of the simplest sentiments of approval and disapproval be correct, it is as natural for the community in general to take pleasure in the anticipation of the hunter's

or the orator's performance as it was for the child of our illustration to exhibit satisfaction at the good fortune of Cinderella.

As intelligence develops, no doubt with a growing perception of the valuable consequences to the community as a whole of the hunter's or the orator's successes, we may look for an intensification of the approbation with which they are regarded. We may reasonably expect to find, as is indeed the case, that qualities which, like physical beauty, are of comparatively little use to the community, though still regarded with satisfaction, will attract infinitely less admiration and will be esteemed of less consequence than those other qualities which are directly serviceable to the public.

We can thus understand how it comes about that there is in the moral theory of a civilised community a very marked distinction between the value set upon qualities like beauty, which are of little, and wealth, which are of doubtful public utility, and those more specially moral qualities—courage, generosity, and the like, which are almost universally beneficial to the community in which they are exercised. This is hardly the place to follow out this suggestion in detail, but the remarks already made will suffice to indicate the way in which a distinction is gradually made by the opinion of the public between qualities approved in the narrower sense of the word on "moral" grounds and qualities which are indeed approved, but are not commonly regarded as distinctively "moral." This narrower sense of "morality," in which it is tantamount to "social performance," is common in the language of all civilised people. There is, however, if our fundamental psychological assumptions are correct, no difference of principle between the judgments and sentiments of approbation called forth by such social performance and those excited by the possession of such qualities as health, strength, wealth, and beauty. The distinction, so far as it exists, is a matter of degree, and has a traceable history. In fact, we find that in communities like most of the cities of old Greece, where physical perfection was held in such high esteem as to reflect distinction upon the country to which an eminent "beauty" belonged, "good looks" could be reckoned by popular sentiment side by side with "virtue" as an integral factor in "the

good," while the feelings inspired in martial societies by the sight of physical weakness seem often to have been indistinguishable from the reprobation accorded to moral baseness.

We feel bound, then, to reject the view according to which the tribal approval depended entirely upon a sense of the public benefit to be derived from the personal qualities of individuals.[1] We prefer to hold that, even apart from such influences, certain qualities, in consequence of the fundamental psycho-physical structure, are the objects of direct approbation on the part both of their possessor and of his fellow-tribesmen. At the same time we fully recognise the truth of all that has been urged as to the educational influences of tribal upon individual sentiment. We have just indicated an opinion that it is under the influence of this powerful force that a distinction is gradually made among qualities approved, such that while certain qualities of disposition and character which are specially beneficial to the community come to occupy the first place in the general esteem, those other qualities of physique and external endowment which were originally equally or even more admired, fall into the second rank, and are finally degraded to the position of mere "auxiliary" adjuncts to the qualities of character which are now regarded as specially "moral" and most eminently worthy of approbation. Hence we can readily join in the admission that, "apart from society," the individual would not be a moral being—not because we, like the altruists, find no qualities worthy of moral approbation but those which minister primarily to the social benefit, but because we recognise that, without society, moral education would be impossible.

If the question, "Could there be such a thing as morality for an individual apart from his society?" be taken literally, it is of course unmeaning. "Apart from society," the individual could not so much as be begotten and born, much less educated into morality. But when the extreme altruist goes on to assume that for an individual suddenly cut

[1] The statements in the text do not conflict with a view like that of Westermarck, according to whom the type of beauty admired by any people is approximately their own racial type, *i.e.* precisely that configuration which may be presumed to have had, under the circumstances, the greatest advantage in the struggle for existence. For we are now considering not the *de facto* connection between the "beautiful" and the "useful," but the subjective conditions under which "beauty" is apprehended by the individual. And we may be sure that the individual, unless he is a Socratic philosopher, does not base his verdict, "This is beautiful," on a previous judgment that "This is useful in the struggle for existence."

off from the society in which his moral education has been received, and condemned to a life of isolation, morality would cease to have any meaning, we are compelled to part company with him. If Robinson Crusoe feels that drinking himself to death would not give him the kind of experience of which he approves, and ordering his life on a decent and sober pattern would, then it cannot be said that morality has lost its meaning to him from the date of his shipwreck. So long as the artificially isolated man is capable of the state of mind expressed in such a resolution as, " I never have made a beast of myself yet, and I am not going to begin now," there remains the difference between forms of behaviour of which he approves and forms of which he disapproves, and he is still to some extent a moral being. It might, in fact, be urged with almost equal plausibility that, since intellectual growth is as dependent as moral upon social environment, Robinson Crusoe becomes *eo ipso* insane as soon as he lands upon his island. It is, however, perfectly true that with long continued isolation from all social environment both intelligence and morality tend to die gradually out, as the unfortunate castaway reverts more and more to the merely animal type. This, however, only proves what we have already admitted, the importance of a social environment for all forms of mental life; it can therefore not be cited in support of the altruistic theory of one particular side of mental life. We shall pursue the subject of the interconnection of personal or self-regarding and social morality in a later chapter on " The Types of Virtue."

We may now proceed to explain briefly the way in which some of the more important concepts employed by moralists in their description of the phenomena of the fully developed moral consciousness arise. The concepts we propose to discuss are those of *obligation, conscience, right and wrong, responsibility, moral personality, and merit.* Our account of these concepts will necessarily be very fragmentary and imperfect, yet we trust it will be sufficient to show, in its general outlines, the nature of the development by which the more complicated mental states denoted by these names arise from such simple approvals and disapprovals as we have hitherto been describing.

A great deal of mystery has been imagined by some moralists to surround the genesis of the sense of obligation and the allied

phenomena of conscience, but the matter, rightly apprehended, seems to be simple enough. Analysis will, I conceive, show three main stages in the formation of the peculiar complex emotional state commonly called the feeling of obligation, which we may for convenience' sake call the tribal, the theological, and the purely ethical stages, taking care, of course, to remember that these distinctions are not absolute, but represent simply typical aspects of a continuous evolution, and that the sense of obligation, as it actually exists in the mind of a civilised individual, may exhibit all three aspects at once.

In dealing with the genesis of the sense of obligation, as in discussing the origin of the distinction between egoism and altruism, we have to begin by recognising the existence of a sort of preparatory process which cannot as yet be said to involve an actual feeling of obligation, though it is clearly tending in that direction. What the distinction between the two chief classes of instinct is to the distinction between egoism and altruism, the earliest dawnings of the feeling of self-dissatisfaction are to the full-grown feeling of obligation. Of dissatisfaction and its importance for the evolution of morality we have already in the course of the present chapter spoken in passing, but must now add a word or two more. Dissatisfaction is an emotional state which in its simplest form shows little trace of the educational influence of tribal or social opinion. Wherever you have—as from an early date in the life-history of every human being we have reason to believe we have—the ideal type of experience in its two primitive forms, memory and anticipation, the conditions are given for the feeling of dissatisfaction. That state of mind which, relatively to the future, or considered apart from time-relations, is disapprobation, is, relatively to the past, dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction, that is, arises wherever an experience belonging to the immediate past is at once remembered and strongly disapproved of; we may define it as emotion of a markedly unpleasant quality attaching to the ideal equivalent of immediately past experience. The very simplest example of such dissatisfaction might be sought in the "brooding" of the animal that has missed its prey, if only we could be quite certain that the animal has "ideas" at all. In default of such insight into the workings of the infra-human mind as

would enable us to settle this question, we may take as our typical example of the earliest forms of dissatisfaction the discontented feeling of the Australian whose boomerang has failed to bring down a duck, or of the Red Indian whose enemy has escaped him unscalped. Such feelings as these clearly owe very little to the educating and transforming effects of public opinion. A "wild boy" may be supposed to experience something of the sort when he has failed to secure his dinner, and a Robinson Crusoe or Enoch Arden would probably retain them long after he had lapsed into all but complete barbarism. As yet, however, untouched by the influence of tribal sentiment, such a discontent as this can hardly be called even a rudimentary sense of obligation; it is, indeed, a feeling of what might have been, it is not yet the feeling of what ought to be.

With the growth of tribal and clan feeling comes a transformation. As intelligence in its development makes it possible for the tribal opinion on the behaviour of individuals to become more and more pronounced and to be more and more definitely expressed in language as well as in action, we pass from the mere feeling of what might have been to the feeling of what is expected of us. It is here that we should perhaps be right in fixing the beginnings of a genuine sense of moral obligation. It is in this form of a sense of what is expected of us by our fellow-tribesmen or fellow-citizens that the sense of obligation or duty meets us most of all in the primitive morality of those uncivilised and half-civilised communities among whom the unwritten customs and traditions of the clan form the ultimate standard of conduct. As, with the gradual development of intelligence, the common insight into common interests also grows, and the tribe or clan widens into the nation, the standard of behaviour expected of each citizen by his country undergoes a corresponding change; the nature of the services expected is conceived with ever-increasing enlightenment and an ever-growing tendency towards embodiment in a consciously systematic moral code. In communities of a high degree of civilisation such a code of conduct expected commonly exists under a double form: the more important services expected from the individual form the basis of a legal code, enforced by a system of punishments and

in some cases rewards, the less important, forming what we commonly call the social code, being left to be enforced simply by the exercise of public opinion. Neglect to behave in the way expected by the civil law is crime (or in minor cases misdemeanour); compliance with it, innocence; more generally compliance with the laws of public opinion, or, as Locke calls it, the law of reputation, is virtue, the violation of its injunctions vice. It is in this form of the recognition of certain performances as expected from us by our fellow-citizens that the sense of obligation most commonly appears in popular Greek moral philosophy, as represented, for instance, by the Socrates of Xenophon, and by many of the minor interlocutors in Plato.

Important modifications are introduced into this conception of the obligatory as the expected by the influence of religion. Recent students of primitive religion seem on the whole to incline to the view that morality and religion were originally unconnected with one another,[1] and that the close fusion between the two which to-day makes it appear self-evident to the average man that an immoral man cannot be really religious is a matter of comparatively late growth in the history of mankind. However that may be, it is at least certain that among all the peoples who have exercised an appreciable influence on the growth of modern civilisation, the gods have been regarded as so far at one with the fortunes of their worshippers as to have an interest in acting as patrons of the customary tribal morality, and as avengers of offences committed against it. Primarily this, of course, means no more than that the god expects the same performances as

[1] If the views urged with much force and ingenuity, as well as with copious learning, in the new edition of Mr. Lang's *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* should ultimately find acceptance, the foregoing statement would have to be considerably modified. Mr. Lang has certainly produced what looks like reasonable evidence of religious beliefs, from which tribal morality receives a supernatural support, even among such peoples as the Australians and the Andamanese, who are commonly supposed to possess no religious traditions beyond certain dull and dirty myths with no special bearing or morality (see *op. cit.* chaps. ix. and xii.). The absence of anything like a religious element from the mysteries of the Central Australian tribes so fully described by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, on the other hand, appears to me to tell rather seriously against Mr. Lang's view, so far as the Australians are concerned. And it seems questionable whether he has made sufficient allowance for the extent to which our accounts of the religions of higher barbarians (*e.g.* Aztecs, Incas) have been coloured by the imagination of Christian reporters. On this point the reader who has been brought up on Prescott and his Spanish authorities may consult with advantage E. J. Payne's *History of the New World*, vol. i.

public opinion expects, and will add his rewards and punishments to those of the community in order to enforce its demands on its members. Gradually, however, the effects of such a "theological sanction" may be traced in a transformation of the conception of the character of the actions expected. To begin with, the rewards and punishments imposed by the god are imagined as far transcending any that the human members of the community have it in their power to inflict or bestow. Moreover, evidence of the kind which superstition finds satisfactory is frequently forthcoming to prove that the god rewards and punishes where his worshippers cannot. Not only overt acts of rebellion against the demands of society, but offences committed merely in thought and intention appear to be taken cognisance of by the unseen and superhuman patron of the community, and to be visited with pestilence or bereavement or other calamity. The effect of all this must inevitably be to intensify the feelings of approbation and disapprobation with which the two forms of conduct are regarded, as well as to favour the recognition of inward disposition and intention as no less proper objects of the moral sentiments than the outward conduct by which they are originally called into being.

But the influence of religion in transforming the primitive sense of what is expected into the civilised man's sense of duty does not cease here. Religion has contributed largely not only towards substituting an inward morality of character and intention for a mere legalistic morality of outward performance; it has also helped to widen the boundaries of the moral community. Originally the conduct that is "expected" is expected only by members of a small clan or group of clans from one another. Towards the alien who stands outside the special group to which you belong, you have, at this stage, no obligations; he expects nothing of you, and you in turn expect nothing of him.[1] The rules of customary conduct only apply within the limits of your own community; towards the outsider you are either indifferent or in the pre-"leviathan" condition of natural hostility. He is a beast from another pack, a black sheep in among the white ones. At first, of course, this exclusive attitude is also that of religion. Your god, like

[1] Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 102

yourself, is a member of your own tribe, and has no interest in troubling himself with the affairs of a stranger. Jehovah, let us say, is the god of your tribe, and will reward or punish you according as you perform the services expected by Himself and by the human members of the clan; but the stranger belongs to a clan of which Chemosh is the patron, and Jehovah and Chemosh are old neighbours, and consequently secular enemies. You have, therefore, so long as you keep clear of the territories of Chemosh, no reason to anticipate unpleasant consequences from having dealt harshly with any of his clansmen.[1]

But the moment that your conception of the power and dignity of your god extends beyond these primitive limits, you are in a fair way to revise your notions of the extent of your moral obligations. As the tribal god becomes, whether under the influence of religious syncretism or of conquest, or from any other reason, first a national and then a universal god, he is thought of as the patron of a wider and wider society, and the notion of what he expects widens proportionately. The part played by religious syncretism in promoting the formation of international confederations in Hellas, and by the worship of the "genius of Cæsar" in creating a link between Roman and provincial in the Early Empire, the establishment of a common ethical and legal code, and the germs at least of a cosmopolitan "brotherhood of man," throughout the regions conquered by the arms and faith of Islam, the partial realisation in the Christian world of the apostle's ideal of a kingdom devoid of the distinctions of nationality, caste, and sex, are all examples of the way in which every increase in the power and dignity of a god carries with it a corresponding enlargement of the boundaries of the society he is supposed to protect.[2]

It is thus that religious ideas have been largely responsible for the transition from a moral code which includes only duties towards the members of a small and exclusive circle to a moral code which embraces, as persons entitled to the performance of certain services, all mankind. The violation of an obligation enforced by the will of a deity is called *sin;* for the fulfilment

[1] Cf. Judges xi. 24, "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Jehovah our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess."

[2] Cf. also the transition, within the limits of Old Testament religion, from the narrow particularism of such a sentiment as "You only have I known of all the nations of the earth," to the broad universalism of the book of Jonah.

of such an obligation there seems to be no special word in our language. The condition of one who, by neglecting to perform the services expected of him by the god, has incurred the divine displeasure is *guilt* or *pollution;* the opposite condition of a *persona grata* who has won the approval of heaven by punctilious observance of the religious law is that of *holiness.* It need scarcely be remarked that these terms are not solely ethical in their meaning. In so far as the services expected by the god consist of ceremonial performances, a distinction is bound to be felt, as intelligence develops, between them and actions which demonstrably affect the well-being of the human members of the society. This distinction is familiar to us as the difference between ceremonial holiness and moral purity. Of course, the very existence of such a distinction implies that men are consciously or unconsciously beginning to lose faith in the existence of their traditional gods. The difference between the moral guilt of adulterating the food-supply and the merely ceremonial guilt of breaking your fast on Friday can only arise among men who, consciously or unconsciously, are abandoning the belief that both actions alike may awake the vengeance of the Deity, and bring like evil consequences upon themselves and their community.

In the creation of this distinction we perceive the beginnings of the transition from the theological to the purely ethical conception of obligation. The *Euthyphro* of Plato is an interesting literary memorial of the intellectual difficulties with which this change has historically been attended. We have seen that, even in the theological stage of the concept, the advance may be made from a morality which is circumscribed by the narrow limits of a tribe to a morality which embraces the whole human family. This advance has, for instance, practically been made in the religious morality of the later books of the Old Testament and the closely allied morality of the Koran. But theological morality, even in its most universalistic stage, still suffers from two serious defects which prevent it from adequately embodying the concept of moral obligation in the form which it assumes for the fully evolved human intelligence. These defects are (1) the presence of an element of caprice, and (2) the retention in some form or other of purely external and arbitrary sanctions of conduct.

So long as moral obligation means simply "what is expected of me," whether by my fellow-men or by God, there is always a possibility that man or God may be induced by prayers, by bribes, or by mere personal likes or dislikes, to expect less of me in some particulars than of another person placed in the same position, or to accept unusual services in some one sort as an equivalent for shortcomings elsewhere. There is always at least the possibility of "compounding for sins that I'm inclined to by damning those I have no mind to." There is the possibility of persuading myself that I can make up for neglect of my obligations to my family or my customers by punctual attendance upon the public ceremonies of worship or by edifying acts of private contrition and devotion. This tendency is naturally fostered by the belief in rewards and punishments arbitrarily affixed by the choice of the Deity to particular forms of conduct. This belief in external sanctions always brings with it the danger that I may persuade myself that the remission of the penalty attached to neglect of my duties will place me in the same position as if I had performed them.

Hence it is, that with the growth of knowledge and reflection there inevitably arises that distinction of which we have already spoken between the ceremonial and the moral law. On the one hand, tradition asserts that the Deity expects from me certain services, largely of a personal kind; on the other, as my intercourse with human beings lying outside the pale of my religion becomes more frequent, and as the conditions of life become generally more complicated, I find myself strongly disapproving of behaviour towards my fellows which is not condemned, or is even enjoined, by the traditional religious code. According to the religious code, all such feelings of self-disapprobation or guilt should be removable by the performance of ceremonies believed to secure the goodwill of heaven, but, as a matter of fact, I find my dissatisfaction with my conduct persisting in spite of all that religion can do for me. This inner discord may even take the extreme form of an apparently irreconcilable conflict between my unwillingness to incur the heaviest penalties of divine wrath by acting counter to a distinct enactment of the religious code, and my equal unwillingness to assure myself of the rewards of divine favour

by performing an act of which I intensely disapprove. When a man comes to the point of saying to himself, "It's a sin, and I shall be sent to hell for it, but do it I must," he has reached the stage of moral development at which the sense of obligation ceases to be theological, and becomes purely ethical.[1]

In this, its final development, the sense of obligation becomes independent of the belief in an external law-giver and an external sanction. The known effects of certain general types of conduct upon my own experiences and those of my fellow-men are now the grounds upon which these types of conduct are approved and disapproved. Moral obligations, in this form, carry, as they do not at either of the stages of development we have hitherto been considering, their own warrant and sanction along with themselves, and morality thus becomes a law without either law-giver or penal code. The sense of obligation has ceased to be a sense of what is expected of me, and has become a sense of what I expect of myself. It is in this form of a self-imposed law that obligation or duty has attracted the notice of Kant and the later moralists, who have built their systems on the foundations of his *Critique of Practical Reason*. The "self-imposed" character of the moral law, however, is not an ultimate and inexplicable mystery; it is a phenomenon which only appears in the most complex and highly developed types of civilised society, and has a history, of which we believe ourselves to have given the leading outlines. From the first vague feeling of what might be, through the varying forms assumed by the sense of what is expected, up to the final culmination of morality in a set of systematic convictions of what, whether expected of me by another or not, ought to be, we are dealing with the continuous evolution of a single aspect of mental life, of which the first beginnings are to be found in the vague, scarcely personal, dissatisfaction of the savage, possibly even of the animal.

It is worth remarking, perhaps, that the sense of obligation, as it actually exists in the average civilised man, is a complex thing made of convictions and sentiments in all the various stages of the process we have just described. "I ought," or "I feel obliged," means to the ordinary Englishman partly

[1] One may perhaps be pardoned for thinking of Huck Finn and his conscientious difficulties about helping the negro to escape.

"Society expects this of me," partly "God will require this at my hands," partly "I cannot respect myself if I do not do this." The theologian in whom the sense of duty habitually takes the form of obedience to the divine will, and the philosopher in whom it wears the shape of reverence for a self-imposed law, are exceptional instances of men in whom the whole mass of moral convictions have developed *pari passu* and homogeneously; in the majority of practical men various parts of the whole mass will be found to have attained very different levels of logical evolution. "I ought to keep my word" perhaps means "I should despise myself if I lied" to the same man to whom "I ought to say my prayers" means "God expects it of me," and "I ought to stand by the privileges of my order," "My social circle will be offended if I don't." It is only the "ought" that means "I expect it of myself" which is the true and proper "ought" of specifically moral obligation. An action expected of myself is a moral *duty*, and the appropriate predicates which are used to describe acts which it is a moral duty to perform and avoid respectively are the words "*right*" and "*wrong*." With the recognition of a self-imposed law, according to which acts may be classed as *right* and *wrong*, the evolution of the sentiment and concept of obligation has reached its goal. Any attempt to transcend these distinctions takes us once more out of the sphere of morality into that of religion. How morality, after emancipating itself from the control of ceremonial religion, comes once more to fuse with art and science in a higher form of religion it will be our object to show in a later chapter. For the present we are concerned simply with the development of the *ethical* concepts and sentiments as such.

Our account of the evolution of the sentiment of obligation is virtually also an account of the genesis of *conscience*. Conscience only differs from the sense of obligation in being the product of a rather more developed process of reflection. Where obligation attaches to the single act, conscience is concerned rather with classes or systems of actions. Conscience, in fact, is simply a general name for the aggregate of a man's convictions as to what his obligations are. Again, in the term "obligation" we perhaps lay more stress on the emotional than on the intellectual factor in the complex sentiment or judg-

ment of approbation; "conscience," on the other hand, is felt to be a name as much for the intellectual judgments passed upon our actions as for the feelings by which these judgments are inspired.

The chief mistake which we have to avoid in talking in this way of the totality of our convictions about our obligations under a common name is that of supposing that there is more unity or system about those convictions than there actually is. "Conscience" seems at first sight to be the name of a single "faculty" or "activity" of the soul, and in this respect to be on a level with "understanding," "will," and the rest of the familiar terms of the old pre-scientific psychology. But we have all learned by now that a "faculty" of the soul is either nothing at all or a convenient name for an aggregate of individual mental states which agree in possessing some important features in common. And experience will readily convince us that this is the case with "conscience." What we mean by a man's "conscience" is the aggregate of his judgments and convictions as to what, from time to time and in varying circumstances, he ought to do. And we shall see on reflection that this aggregate of conscientious convictions is by no means so much of a piece as our use of a single name for it would seem at first to imply. The ideal man, no doubt, would be one whose judgments about his duties formed a single coherent system, equally developed in every conceivable direction and free from any shade of inconsistency or one-sidedness; but we are unfortunately none of us "ideal," and what we actually find in ourselves is not one thoroughly articulated system of moral convictions, but many systems of the most varying degrees of relative development, not complete harmony and coherence, but undue callousness in one direction balanced by over-scrupulosity in another. One man has that system of conscientious convictions and scruples which has to do with commercial integrity developed to the point of punctiliousness, while in that which is concerned with the repression of his animal appetites he may be as rudimentary as the savage; another is keenly alive to the most trifling deviation from the strictest standard of sexual purity, but quite insensible to the immorality of contracting monetary obligations which he has no prospect of discharging.

These are, no doubt, extreme cases; the requirements of ordinary life naturally beget in most of us a certain average all-round moral development, though, even so, every considerable section of society has its own distinctive peculiarities. The country gentleman's conscience is not that of the tradesman, nor the soldier's that of the lawyer. On a less striking scale members of the same social class may all find in themselves the same inequality of moral development in different directions. We may, in fact, apply to the case before us the excellent remark which Beneke has made about "faculties" in general.[1] Each one of us has not one conscience, but an indefinite plurality of consciences, each with its own appropriate subject-matter and its own peculiar degree of sensibility.

To put the same thing in another way, we may say that the term "conscience" is the name given to a certain aggregate of "apperceptive" systems. As the persons and objects with which we have to deal in practical life naturally fall into a number of more or less detached groups, so the judgments as to our duty which are concerned with these various groups of persons and objects tend to fall into similar partly independent clusters. The judgments which concern one and the same group naturally "apperceive" one another; that is, by their reciprocal action upon one another, they readily coalesce into systems with a coherent and definite structure of their own, endowed with sufficient permanence to offer considerable resistance to modification from without; and we thus come in the end by a fairly fixed set of moral principles. In the consciousness of an ideal personage, such as the "wise man" of Aristotle, this process would be carried to its final completion; the systems formed in the manner already described would further proceed to assimilate and apperceive one another into a single and all-embracing scheme of life; in the actual world, however, this ideal is only imperfectly realised; there are always gaps and flaws in our practical as well as in our theoretical interpretation of the facts of life.

Taking "conscience," then, as a general name for a rather loose aggregate of partially independent sets of convictions and principles, we may further say that each of these subordinate systems of moral judgments (*e.g.* the average man's convictions

[1] *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, § 11.

about business honesty) is the final outcome of a process whereby a number of individual judgments of the same general type have coalesced into a single systematic whole; and the individual judgments out of which these systems have grown may easily be seen to be distinguished from other judgments by the common characteristic that they are all judgments of approbation and disapprobation—that is, judgments expressive of the feeling of pleasure or pain with which a certain course of action is contemplated in retrospect or in anticipation—judgments about the pleasure-pain character, not of events in the way of sense-experience, but of our memories and expectations of them. This description will, I think, be sufficient to show how closely conscience is connected with the sentiment of obligation, and how completely any analysis which throws light on the growth of the latter will dispel the clouds of mystery which have sometimes been thought to hang about the former. From our point of view there is, indeed, just as much or as little miracle and mystery about conscience as about any other complex phenomenon of fully developed mental life. The laws which preside over the development from the first primitive judgments of approbation and disapprobation of the elaborate system of obligations recognised by the consciences of civilised mankind are precisely those same laws of mental synthesis which govern the formation of all systems of universal judgments.

It is thus a complete psychological mistake to speak of the judgments of "conscience" as being in some way or other *sui generis*, and possessing a peculiar and incommunicable infallibility. They are only so far *sui generis* as any set of judgments concerning a special subject-matter may be said to be so. There is, of course, a wide generic difference between judgments expressive of our sentiments and preferences and judgments which merely record the observed facts of experience in abstraction from the feelings which the contemplation of them awakens. In respect of this general difference, the judgments of logic, ethics, and æsthetics may perhaps be said to be *generically* different from those of the natural sciences, and generically like one another. There is a logician's or philosopher's, and an artist's conscience, as well as a moral conscience. It is further possible to point out, as we ourselves shall try to

do in the sequel, certain characteristics by which the judgments of approbation which constitute the subject-matter of ethics differ from those closely allied judgments which are studied by æsthetics. The existence of such lesser distinctions, however, by no means effaces the family resemblance which all systems of judgments of approbation exhibit, as contrasted with judgments about merely "objective" facts. As we may have occasion to see in the course of our essay, the line of demarcation between those judgments of approbation which belong to ethics and those which belong to æsthetics is by no means rigidly fixed. Our decision as to what are questions of morality and what questions of mere "taste" will be found to be so largely a matter of mere convenience that there is much to be said for Herbart's treatment of ethics as a mere subordinate division of the wider science.

Nor does our analysis of the facts denoted vaguely by the term "conscience" justify the popular assertions about the infallibility of its judgments. To assert that conscience is infallible would be to say in other words that we never have good reason to modify our judgments of approbation or the sentiments which they express. This is, of course, infinitely far from being the fact. Every new discovery of the consequences to ourselves and to others of a line of conduct may possibly modify the feelings with which in future the idea of acting in that particular way is regarded. There is thus every opportunity for the almost unlimited modification of our judgments of approbation and disapprobation in the course of a long experience. The validity and authority of those judgments, like that of all other judgments, ultimately depends upon the degree to which we have succeeded in acquiring the means of passing a sound judgment. "Conscientious objections" of the kind so frequently appealed to by electioneering agitators of various kinds, *i.e.* the strong prejudices of persons who have never availed themselves of the opportunity of forming a sound judgment as to the probable effects of their conduct, are really entitled to no more respect than any other set of ignorant prejudices. We might, indeed, fairly say no man has a right to a conscience in matters which he has not qualified himself to understand. At best the "infallibility of conscience" can only mean that at any one moment I know what I do

approve; it affords me no guarantee that, when I have learned by experience the consequences of acting in the way I approve, I shall still approve the same thing. The extent to which my conscientious convictions are in this latter sense "infallible," *i.e.* the extent to which my approbation and disapprobation are a matter of permanent system and coherent principle, depends upon the extent to which I can succeed in informing myself about the bearing of the particular act upon my own life and the lives of others as a whole, and this is a kind of information which can only be obtained by long and careful study of the physical and social conditions of human existence.

Responsibility is a concept the development of which clearly runs parallel to that of obligation. Psychologically the main difference between the sense of responsibility and the sense of obligation would seem to be that where the latter implies a reference to the future the former carries a conscious reference to the past. I feel the "obligation" to perform an action when I at once contemplate it as a thing yet to be done and as a thing expected from me. I feel "responsible" when I remember an act as already done, and know at the same time that it was not what was "expected." Responsibility may thus be said to be the other side of obligation, and like obligation to appear successively in three main forms as general intelligence advances. I am primarily responsible to my tribesmen, who will visit their displeasure upon me when I fail to behave in the way they expect of me. In a more complex form of society than the primitive tribe or clan, this responsibility appears partly as actual accountability to the legal tribunals of the state, partly as liability to the censure of "public opinion." Or again, I am responsible for the performance of the conduct expected of me to that unseen and superhuman member and patron of the tribe who has exceptional powers of observing delinquencies that pass unnoticed by other eyes, and exceptional facilities for avenging them. I am responsible to God (or more generally to the "supernatural," "the ancestral spirits," etc.) for the conduct He demands of me. All that has been said about the way in which theological conceptions widen the scope of obligation, while at the same time bringing the secret intention into equal importance with the overt act, will, of course, apply

with equal force to the influence of religion upon the sense of responsibility. To God I am responsible for thoughts and purposes as well as for words and actions, and for my behaviour towards all mankind as well as towards my townsmen and countrymen. Finally, when the evolution of ethical sentiment is complete, I am responsible to myself for obedience to a law which I impose on myself, for the discharge of duties which I expect from myself, and should continue to expect, though God and man were to agree to connive at my disregard of them.

It is clear, then, that responsibility, like obligation, with which it is so intimately connected, implies the existence of the "ideal" forms of mental life, memory and anticipation, and that a being possessed only of sensations could not possibly feel itself responsible. If any one likes to apply the term "personality" to such rudimentary selfhood as is implied in the simplest memories and expectations, he will then be justified in saying none but persons are responsible. Such relatively clear consciousness of personality, however, as is enjoyed by the civilised adult does not precede, but rather springs from a sense of responsibility. It is through being treated as responsible and thus made to feel my continuity with my own past that I come to be truly a "person." The juristic and casuistic questions about responsibility for acts done under intoxication, in temporary insanity, etc., are interesting as serving to show how vague our ideas about personality are, but do not concern us here.

It remains to add a few words of explanation about the most difficult and complex, which is also historically the most recently acquired of the principal ethical concepts—the concept of moral personality. To some readers it will perhaps seem strange that we should have spent so much time in discussing obligation, conscience, and responsibility, without having as yet dealt with what is regarded by a numerous and distinguished school of moralists as the central and fundamental concept of ethics. Our reason for adopting this order of treatment is in truth a very simple one, and it is this. It is demonstrable matter of history that the full sense of personality is a later and more complex product of psychical evolution than the simpler forms, at any rate, of ethical practice and

theory. The works of Plato and Aristotle are by themselves a striking proof that men knew what was meant by duty and the good and conscience and the rest of the ethical concepts long before they had conceived the elaborate hypotheses about their mental nature which give the modern word "person" its meaning.[1] For the psychologist it is a fact, the significance of which can hardly be overrated, that Greek philosophy ran its course from its dawn in the crude physical speculation of Thales to its Alexandrian sunset without ever inventing any technical term corresponding to our category of "personality."

Nor does it seem that the loss was altogether on the side of Greek philosophy. When one comes to ask after the exact meaning of the word "person," one finds one's self lost in a mixture of vague metaphysics, with, if possible, vaguer psychology. Apart from metaphysical assumptions, which have been on principle excluded from our statement of the empirical facts of ethics, it seems impossible to say exactly how much or how little mental continuity is requisite to constitute personality or personal identity, unless you specify more particularly the purposes for which you desire to define the terms.[2] Personality clearly means some sort of conscious mental continuity, but it seems in vain to ask how much. Are the higher animals in a rudimentary way persons? Is a child of tender years a person? Can the fragmentary experiences of my dreams be said to belong to the life of a person? If so, do they belong to *my* personal life? What degree of solution of mental continuity brought by disease, accident, etc., would amount to alteration, and what further degree to suppression of personality? These are questions which every one can ask, but no one can answer with certainty and precision. Your answer to any one of them depends upon the amount of conscious mental continuity you mean to include in your definition of "personality," and there seems to be no better reason for adopting a high or low standard in the matter than the taste

[1] For instance, the performance of actions ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ so strongly insisted upon by Aristotle is exactly what we mean by obedience to a sense of duty or obligation; the virtuous προαίρεσις and the conflict in the mind of the ἀκράτης between this and his momentary desires describe the same psychological facts as are covered by our notion of "conscience" and "remorse," and the distinction between "voluntary" and "involuntary" acts corresponds exactly to that which would be drawn to-day between the deeds for which we are, and those for which we are not "responsible."

[2] See the discussion in *Appearance and Reality*, chap. ix., from which what follows is drawn.

and fancy of the individual psychologist. If we are to have a definite answer to the question, "How *much* is requisite to constitute personality?" we must first of all know what kind of personality is meant. If you mean *legal* personality, the line will have to be drawn in one place; if you mean *moral* personality, it may be best to draw it in another; it is all a question of degrees.

In fact, the question, "When has a continuous stream of mental life sufficient individuality to make it a person?" is exactly like the equally unanswerable question, "When is a quantity of matter one thing?" neither can be answered unless you know the purpose for which the definition is required. If we want to know what is moral personality we must, then, first of all appeal to common pre-scientific language to tell us what kind of beings are actually recognised as moral persons. If we can once be clear in a general way as to what sort of mental existence is clearly recognised as personal, for the purposes of our ordinary moral judgments, we may succeed in discovering what peculiar psychological qualifications go to constitute moral personality. Now, as a matter of fact, we never regard any creatures as persons, in the special sense attached by ethics to the word, except those who are at any rate in some degree "responsible" for their actions. When, in a famous criminal trial some few years ago, a child of three was described by one of the witnesses as a "person of unusual determination," there was probably no spectator in the Court and no reader of the reports of the case who did not feel the phrase to be a ridiculous abuse of language. In another connection the application of the word "person" to a mere baby might perhaps have been allowed to pass unchallenged, but where the question was one of personal *character*, it could not but appear strangely out of place. And in all probability the universal answer to the question *why* a child of three should not be called a person would have been, "Because persons are responsible for their actions and babies are not." Popular language marks the same feeling of the distinction between babies and "persons" by its instinctive tendency to substitute, to the mortal offence of admiring mothers and nurses, the neuter for the properly personal pronouns in speaking of them and their belongings.

Moral personality, then, is founded upon "responsibility," and implies at least as much mental continuity as we have seen to be necessary for the genesis of the sense of responsibility. No being has even the rudiments of moral personality who does not possess enough mental continuity to remember its own past and anticipate its own future actions. But the degrees to which any creature retains the memories of its past actions and anticipates its future actions may be almost infinitely various. In the early stages of child-life it may be that only the immediate past and the immediate future are remembered and anticipated. The events of a few days or even hours ago have faded into irreparable oblivion, or at least, if recalled at all, seem so far away as to be no more real than a dream; the events of next week are as little imagined and expected beforehand as the events of the next century or of the next life.[1] In adult life, on the other hand, there may be a vast stock of orderly and systematised memories reaching back from the just vanishing moment to the dim and distant years of early childhood, and an equally systematic stock of plans and anticipations embracing a future that has to be measured by decades, or even by centuries. It is clear that along with the general intellectual growth indicated by this advance in memory and anticipation there must go a corresponding increase in capacity to recollect the marks of approbation and disapprobation with which various forms of conduct have been received in the past, and to anticipate the way in which they are likely to be received in the future. Whatever circumstances make generally for an increase in power to remember and anticipate will thus make, in the absence of any special counteracting influences, for the development of the sense of responsibility and the consciousness of moral personality.

Moral personality, then, is not a fixed psychological condition which emerges once and for all at a certain point in our mental history; it is normally in a state of constant progressive development from the first dawn of intelligence in early childhood to its culmination in the years of intellectual maturity. To be in the fullest and highest sense a moral personality is the same thing as to be a man of fixed principles

[1] Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 264, "An Australian native never looks far enough ahead to consider what will be the effect on the food-supply in future years if he allows a particular child to live."

and formed character. It is, in other words, to have reached a pitch of mental development at which memory and the sense of responsibility go back to the furthest past, and anticipation and the sense of obligation reach forward to the most distant future events of life. Just in so far as this continuity of the experienced present with the past and the future is actually realised in our consciousness are we truly moral *persons* in the sense demanded by ethics.

Personality in the moral sense is thus simply the systematised form of what, in its simpler beginnings, we call the sense of obligation and responsibility. If, then, some rudimentary personality, so much at least as is implied in the simplest sense of responsibility for the immediate past, and obligation in the immediate future, be present in even the earliest forms of ethical action and feeling, full and complete moral personality is itself not an original endowment, but one of the latest acquisitions of individual and race. It is a prime moral duty to become a person, just because you are not already one.[1] The flighty, irresponsible beings of the "Harold Skimpole" type, who, by education or disposition, are incapable of bearing in mind the responsibilities contracted a day ago or making provision to meet the calls of the morrow, are not so much bad and immoral persons as creatures who, whether through their own fault or not, are not in the true ethical sense persons at all. The current phrase, "an overgrown child," describes their mental condition with strict scientific accuracy.

It is not my purpose in this connection to write an elaborate history of the steps by which full moral personality develops out of the simplest sense of responsibility to the tribe or neighbours for an individual act. For the complete description of the development we should require—(1) an account of the general laws regulating the formation of interconnected systems of universal judgments and the concepts in which the results of these judgments are summarised; (2) and in particular, a theory of the formation of that set

[1] Of course one can fall back upon the distinction (well called by Bacon "frigida distinctio") between *actus* and *potentia*, and say every human being is, even in infancy (or before?) *potentially* a person. But has any problem ever really been solved to the satisfaction of an unbiassed mind, by the introduction of a mere verbal antithesis of this kind? What is "potentiality"? and is not everything "potentially" most other things, when one comes to think of it?

of judgments and concepts which issues in the distinction of a *self*, originally conceived as identical with the organic body, from other selves, and from the world of selfless things; (3) with a further theory of the steps by which the first materialistic notion of the self is transformed into the conception of self as an immaterial system of ideas, emotions, and habits. All these topics are so fully dealt with in the current works on general psychology that it seems unnecessary to go into them here in anything like detail. On (2) we have already said enough for our purpose in the last chapter, where we spoke of the origin of the distinction between the subject or self and the things amongst which it moves.

We need only add here that, for the particular form which this concept of a permanent self takes in ethics, the existence of a social as well as a merely physical environment is the most important condition. An intelligent being placed alone amid a world of inanimate things might, indeed, by the same sort of process as that by which my own body gets distinguished from other objects, come to have some consciousness of itself as a *self*, but it would scarcely be likely to develop all that we mean by *moral* selfhood. It is by being expected to do certain things, and by being made to feel the approval and disapproval of my elders and fellows in consequence of what I have done, that I get into the habit of feeling myself a responsible creature or moral person. The actual fact of having to answer for my behaviour begets the corresponding subjective sense of accountability; children whose education has been conducted by negligent elders upon the principle of *laisser aller* show through life, or until later experience has sobered them, a lack of moral character and personality due to the fact that they have not been made to answer to anybody for their early conduct. On the moral side as well as on the intellectual the individual is the product of the tribe, a fact which we shall find of significance when we come to consider the claims of some modern egoistic speculations in which the emancipation of the individual from all social obligations and restraints is set up as the goal of moral progress.

There is, however, one important aspect of the growth of

the concept of moral personality which claims at our hands something more than a reference to the standard works on psychology, as it exercises a singularly potent influence upon the character of the primitive ethical notions themselves. We have already said that originally the predicates "good" and "bad," which express the primary ethical sentiments of approval and disapproval, can be and are applied to the widest variety of objects. Originally, as the evidence of language as well as of child psychology shows, qualities of things and qualities of persons, qualities of body and qualities of mind, are all alike described as "good" and "bad" respectively, according as the contemplation of them is pleasing or painful. The child who flogs in his anger the table against which he has knocked his head, the savage who whips or breaks his idol when the results of his worship are unsatisfactory, has the habit, as we loosely say, of "personifying" everything, or rather, as we might more accurately express ourselves, has not learned to draw the distinctions betokened by the use of the terms "person" and "thing"; for him the behaviour of things and the behaviour of persons stand ethically on the same level. The adult civilised mind, on the other hand, in spite of occasional relapses into the attitude of childhood under the influence of momentary passion,[1] habitually draws an immense distinction between the qualities and behaviour of things and those of persons. Things, he holds, are not "good" or "bad" in the full moral sense of the words; *moral* goodness belongs only to persons. And, even among the actions and qualities of persons, the fully civilised mind draws a further and less clear distinction between those which are, properly speaking, morally good or bad, and those which are not. The distinction seems to rest on no very assured psychological foundation, and the moment you try to find any fixed principle about it you get into confusion, but the fact of its existence is undeniable. Roughly speaking, the civilised mind, consistently or not, holds that the physical qualities of persons, and such of their actions as are done either under compulsion or in unavoidable ignorance of the circumstances, are "indifferent"; it is only psychical

[1] Compare also the state of mind revealed by the Athenian practice of trying the weapon with which the ox was killed at the Dipolia, and the numerous mediæval trials of animals.

qualities and actions arising from the approval or disapproval of an idea which are called morally "good" or "bad."

The sharp contrast thus existing for the civilised mind between things approved on "moral" and things approved on other grounds has even led many psychologists, in defiance of the evidence of language and of child-life, to assert that the sentiments of "moral" approbation are absolutely *unique*, and not to be traced to a common origin with those of more general or æsthetic approbation in the wider sense of the term. As we have throughout assumed that *all* judgments of approbation have a common psychological origin, and that the various applications of the predicates "good" and "bad" are only modifications of a single primary meaning, we are bound to offer some explanation of the growth of this distinction between the "good" and "bad" of morality and the more general "good" and "bad" of mere general approval and disapproval. Note that it is by no means sufficient to say that the recognition of *any* kind of distinction between persons and things must affect the sentiments connected with the qualities of each class of objects. The distinction in question has, for instance, not seriously affected our use of the æsthetic predicates "beautiful" and "ugly." When we speak of a "beautiful" woman, or even of a "beautiful" character, we are quite conscious that we are using an epithet which, in spite of any minor modifications of meaning, is generically identical in sense with that which we employ in talking of a "beautiful" landscape. No one has ever been moved by consideration of the moral applications of æsthetic predicates to suggest that the sentiment of moral "beauty" is primarily distinct *in genere* from that awakened by any other kind of "beauty." How is it, then, that a distinction which has so little affected the meaning of "beautiful" should so profoundly have modified the meaning of "good" as to lead naturally to the belief that the "goodness" of an action or a character is something quite different from the goodness of anything else? How has it come about that the predicates "good" and "bad" should customarily convey a different meaning when applied to persons from that they bear in reference to things? The following suggestions are thrown out as possibly helping to explain how predicates, originally ascribed to the qualities

of both persons and things alike, should by civilised men now be used primarily of persons only, and only in a secondary sense of things.

(1) One of the earliest differences to be perceived between things and persons is, that things never show any signs of disapproving or approving our behaviour to them. A child must very early in his life discover that persons expect certain behaviour of him, and express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in various ways, while things do nothing of the sort. Men and women take the child's offered sweetmeats, they smile with pleasure and say, "Good boy"; the table or chair does nothing of the kind. Men and animals, again, sometimes hit back if you strike or scratch them; you may flog the table as long as you like without provoking any retort. These facts are commonly and rightly insisted upon by the psychologist as the source of our notions of activity and causation; ethics is also interested in them as affording the basis for still earlier and simpler mental discoveries. A child is enabled by experiences of this kind, even before he possesses any intelligible theories about causation, to discover that it is the behaviour of men and animals, and not that of tables and chairs, that is of primary importance to him; his attention is taken up and his emotions aroused much more by the things that expect certain behaviour from him than by those that do not, and this of itself would sufficiently explain why it is that the judgment of approbation and disapprobation soon comes to be concerned principally, if not exclusively, with the actions of persons and not with the qualities of things. It is the behaviour of persons that to an ever-increasing extent has the main significance for our emotional life.

(2) There is also an almost more striking difference between persons and things which a child would probably soon discover for himself, even if his elders did not take the pains they do to impress it upon him. The thing, as the child soon finds, cannot move itself; if it is to be the means of exciting a change in his emotions, it must be made so by the intervention of a person. For instance, if his toy is broken, it is to father or mother that he goes to have it mended; if the table hurts him when he runs against it, he is shown how by taking more heed to his steps he might have

escaped the accident. If he tries to move a heavy object in order to get at something that he wants, and pulls it down upon himself, he is told that he should have asked some one to lift it for him. All through his life in the nursery, experience is teaching him that it depends in almost every case on some piece of behaviour on the part of himself or some other member of the family, whether the qualities of the things round him shall be productive of pleasure or of pain to him. The lesson he is thus learning is commonly said to be that things have no power of action, or that activity belongs only to persons. It may be expressed without introducing the obscure metaphysical implications of the term "activity" in the following form. All through childhood we are busy learning that our physical environment is of only secondary importance in its influence on our happiness in comparison with our social environment. The higher the grade of civilisation attained by the society into which a child is born, the more completely is this subjection of physical to social environment an accomplished fact, and the earlier and more thoroughly the lesson is learned.

Putting aside all metaphysical theories of causation, it is increasingly true, as civilisation advances, that persons can help themselves and things cannot. On every occasion when the child in the nursery is shown how he may escape being hurt by things by taking care not to run into them, or by asking the help of his elders, on every occasion on which his interest is awakened in a new toy by being shown how to "make it work," he is learning that the character of our experiences depends primarily upon the behaviour of persons, and only in a very secondary degree upon the qualities of things. Thus, while still in the nursery, the child of a civilised race comes to connect his pleasant and his painful memories and anticipations above all things with persons and their doings. It is therefore not at all to be wondered at that it is to persons and their actions that he specially applies the predicates "good" and "bad," when he learns to use them as expressive of his sentiments of approbation and disapprobation. It is not because the ethical sentiments "do not belong to the pleasure-pain series," but because our pleasures and pains are infinitely more dependent upon the behaviour of persons than upon the qualities of

things, that we come by a very natural process to apply the ethical predicates all but exclusively to persons and the actions of persons, and to feel that things are "good" or "bad" only in a secondary sense.

The same lesson of the overwhelmingly preponderating importance of the social over the physical environment, which the child born into a civilised family has every facility for learning promptly and easily, would in the ordinary course of experience be slowly and painfully mastered by the primitive community. Men who at first attributed the failure of their shot to the "badness" of the bow, would gradually learn how, by selecting the right kind of wood and fibre, etc., the accidents they found so unpleasant might be avoided. From the moment this lesson was learned, it would be the persons responsible for the selection of the wood, and not the wood itself, around whom the feelings which find vent in the judgment "good" or "bad" would centre; what had once led to an expression of disgust with the bad bow would now inspire a judgment of censure on the maker. It is precisely those things which are so little known to us or so far away from us that we cannot discover any way of influencing their behaviour by our own—the volcano, the sea, the wind—around which the ethical predicates and the sentiments they express continue to cling long after men have come in general to transfer their approbation and disapprobation from the thing to the person by whose conduct it can be made available either for pleasure or for pain. And it is, of course, also precisely these great inaccessible constituents in our physical environment which determine the limits within which our happiness or unhappiness can be made, by advancing civilisation to depend upon the social environment, to the exclusion of everything else. Scientific progress has enabled us to be very largely indifferent to changes in the mere physical environment, but it has not as yet discovered a substitute for the sun or an antidote against an earthquake. Hence, even in civilised society, there still lingers a sense of the "beneficence" of the central body of our system and the "spite of nature" that permits a great volcanic eruption or a deadly earthquake.[1] Note that the

[1] For an interesting example of the way in which these primitive ethical sentiments can linger on even in the most philosophic mind read the curious footnote in Bosanquet's *Logic*, ii. 218. It is a mistake to speak of such judgments as if they

process described is accelerated by our instinctive special *interest* in (1) things that move, (2) and of things that move in our own species. Hence the distinction is drawn even more easily than was suggested above.

These reflections will, I trust, remove any difficulties which might otherwise be felt about our derivation of moral predicates from a form of sentiment originally aroused by many other besides personal qualities. As the recognition of mental continuity and the supreme importance of the actions of persons becomes increasingly clear, it becomes possible to regard any single act as only one instance of a general habit of acting in a particular way displayed by the agent on numerous and repeated occasions. It thus becomes possible to pass judgments of approbation and disapprobation not merely on individual acts, but upon whole series of acts, upon habits and ways of life. At the same time, various influences, probably most of all such religious influences as have been already mentioned in this connection, lead to the recognition of intention and feeling by the side of overt action as proper objects of approval and disapproval. By this means a comparison of complete lives and characters in respect of moral goodness and badness is rendered possible. The estimated moral goodness of a life or character as a whole is called its *merit*.[1] The concept of *merit* (in the case of negative merit, *demerit*) has presumably passed through much the same stages as those of *obligation* and *responsibility*. My *merit* means primarily the tokens of approbation I receive from the society to which I belong; then tokens of divine approbation; finally, the degree of approbation with which I myself, or another comparing my character as a whole with a recognised standard of obligation, is constrained to regard it. The merit of a single act can only be estimated when it is considered in connection with the whole life and character of which it forms part.

Merit, as expressing the ethical judgment upon a completed life or character, is the most highly complex concept,

arose from a "personification" of natural objects; they are remains of a primitive stage of feeling at which the ethical predicates had not got themselves specially attached to "personal" objects.

[1] *N.B.*—It is identical with the ἀξία of which Aristotle speaks as the standard of equality in "distributive" justice.

and the last word of ethics. There remains, it is true, a point of view at which it ceases to be appropriate to express either approbation or disapprobation of character; viewed in relation to the whole universe of which it forms a part, one life may be said to be just as essential to the whole scheme and just as much in its proper place as any other, since all alike, each in its way, display the characteristic attributes of the whole, and none could be suppressed without mutilation of the system to which all belong. This is the view of science, which finds in the universe nothing to praise or blame, but only things to understand, and of evangelical religion, which sees in the destination of some vessels to honour and others to dishonour the same free grace and disposition of God. Whatever may be said for such an attitude—and we shall see in a later chapter that there is a great deal to be said for it—it is not that of ethics. In leaving behind us the final expression of human approbation and disapprobation in our estimate of man's merit and demerit, we are passing out of the realm of ethics. If the concept of "merit" will not adequately express the full truth about human actions, then ethics must renounce all pretensions to being a body of ultimate metaphysical truths.

The contents of the last few pages, and in particular the remarks on *merit* and *demerit* with which they closed, will have made it clear that a systematic account of the ethical sentiments, as they exist in the civilised community, must take the form of a theory of values. Every judgment of approbation may be called, with respect to its attitude towards the object approved, a judgment of relative *worth*. Hence ethics has in modern times frequently and rightly been called a science of values or worth. If we have not ourselves hitherto used this expression, the reason has been simply a desire to guard against the metaphysical implications that might to some minds seem to lurk in the use of the word "worth." Now that we have offered an entirely empirical account of the formation and meaning of the principal ethical concepts, we may perhaps, before bringing a lengthy chapter to the close for which both reader and writer are longing, make a few remarks about worth or value in general, in order more completely to divest the terms of any ulterior metaphysical significance.

There is, in particular, one dangerous misconception which we feel we cannot pass without a word of warning. One sometimes hears of a certain "absolute worth," which is supposed to belong to the qualities and actions approved by morality, and to these alone. In contrast with the "absolute worth" of conduct which conforms to the laws of morality, conduct conformable to the laws of other systems of values, as, for instance, economics, is then said to have a merely "relative" worth. In this way the recognition of the essential character of ethics as a theory of values may be made to lead back to the old error, criticised in our last chapter, of supposing that ethics is founded upon a metaphysical theory of the absolutely good or ultimate "best." In order to guard against any possible misconceptions of this sort, it is well to insist in the plainest terms at our disposal upon the purely "relative" character of all worth or value whatsoever. "Absolute" worth is, if you take the terms at all strictly, no better than a flat contradiction. For "worth" or "value" of all kinds belongs only to those things the possession of which affords satisfaction to sentient beings. To say that a thing has "worth" or "value" means no more than that there exist beings to whom the possession and ultimately the enjoyment of the thing in question affords pleasure. The measure of value of all kinds is our sense of our own needs. That has value which is recognised by mankind as answering to some human want. The want may be material, it may be æsthetic or intellectual, or again it may be moral. In all these senses, then, a thing or act can be said to possess value. That has material value which ministers to our need of nourishment, warmth, and shelter, that æsthetic value which gives us the peculiar kind of satisfaction that arises from the contemplation of unity and coherency of form, that intellectual value which assists us in the endeavour to discover unity of plan in the bewildering maze of physical and psychical occurrences; lastly, that has moral value or worth which answers to the demand for a type of character consistent with itself and with the structure and purpose of civil society.

And one thing is "worthier" than another just in so far as it yields to the beings whose enjoyment of it is presupposed permanent and unconditional satisfaction. One thing may be

more "valuable" than another because it is less rapidly consumed in the process of enjoyment, and thus may be made to yield pleasure not once merely, but repeatedly, and as a comparative permanency. Plato would have said, and I think justly, that it is for this among other reasons that the satisfactions of the intellect are "better" or more "real" or "worthy" than those of the belly.[1] You cannot, says the proverb, eat your cake and have it too, but the food of the mind and soul, like the sacramental elements, is "eaten and not consumed."

And again, there are some things which will give us satisfaction only under special and by no means always existing psycho-physical conditions, and there are yet others from which we derive unfailing enjoyment in all the changing conditions of life. Meat can only be enjoyed when you are hungry and drink when you are thirsty, but the man of ethical or religious conviction enjoys the approval of conscience or the peace which passeth understanding alike in riches and in poverty, in fulness and in hunger, in freedom and in bonds, in health and in sickness. And there are experiences, in themselves momentary, the remembrance of which is attended with constant satisfaction, while for an anticipated renewal of them one would face a lifetime of pain and obloquy. Manifestly, then, more value must be ascribed to the things which give us so unconditional a pleasure than to those which by a slight psychical or physical modification of the organism may become objects of disgust and loathing.[2]

Thus, by attention to these two characteristics, permanence of enjoyment and unconditionality of enjoyment, we may readily construct on purely empirical principles a table of values, and we may even explain the ascription of the first place in the table to those qualities of moral and religious character which no freak of external fortune can take away from us. But every "value" in the table, from the "absolute worth" of moral character down to the "worth" of the most momentary gratification of animal appetite, is purely "relative" to the peculiar psycho-physical constitution of the human

[1] *Republic*, 585.

[2] Though it must not be forgotten that the *amantium irae* are not unknown in the religious world, and that there, as elsewhere, they do not always end in the proverbial way.

organism. Things have worth for us merely because they meet *our* wants. What for us is worthless may for differently constituted beings have considerable value, and *vice versa*. If intelligence had happened to develop in the canine rather than in the human race, carrion would have been valuable and clothing materials would have been worthless. If it were not that, in a race of creatures placed in the environment in which we find ourselves, mercy and purity are, on the whole, productive of more general unconditional and unfailing enjoyment than cruelty and license, there would be no meaning in saying that the former qualities are worthier than the latter.

The "absolute worth" of morality means only that, on the whole, in morality human beings find something which gives them, independently of special modifying circumstances, what they want, and in wickedness they do not. History suggests the reflection that with great differences in the physical and social environment there must go corresponding differences in the scale of values; the respective worth to society of ruthlessness and of mercifulness in its rulers is not now what it was no longer ago than the Norman Conquest. And the eye of religious intuition seems also to discern that our distinctions of moral worthiness and unworthiness lose their significance in the sight of God, before whom all are alike guilty, and with whom justification is a matter not of merit, but of free grace. To say that certain acts or qualities have "absolute" or "unconditional" worth, then, can mean no more than that their worth depends only upon the conditions involved in the very existence of civilised human society in general, and not upon any more special circumstances peculiar to a particular individual or a particular civilised society. Justice, for instance, may be said to have absolute value in the sense that its worth for the Hellene is, in the phrase of Aristotle, the same as its worth for his Persian neighbour, though for such intelligent beings as the "gods," who have none of the wants to which the institution of private property ministers, it is valueless.[1]

It would be easy, by reference to the meaning of "value" in economics and æsthetics, to show that in those sciences

[1] The statement in the text is based upon a comparison of *Eth. N.* V. 1134b, 18 ff. with *Eth. N.* X. 1178b, 10 ff.

also the "valuable" and "worthless" mean simply the things that do and that do not yield satisfaction to men. The only difference between the "absolute" worth of character and the relative worth of wealth or beauty is that the wants satisfied by morality are more universally felt and more constantly recurring than any others. The craving for truth or beauty is confined, even in civilised society, to a select few; society in general could subsist without philosophers or painters—it could not subsist without the attainment by the vast majority of its members of a certain level of moral sentiment. And, again, a man may be happy in ignorance, or even in poverty, but—so moralists at least assume—few men could be permanently contented with a life of successful villainy. The art of morality is the one art in which, to paraphrase the expressions of the Platonic *Protagoras*, no one can afford to be an amateur.[1] The worth of morality, then, is "absolute" only so long as the existence of the general conditions of civilised human life is tacitly taken for granted; it is "absolute" in the sense that the cravings satisfied by moral institutions and habits are such as are inseparable from the existence of intelligent beings with the constitution and environment of mankind, whereas those which give scientific or æsthetic experiences their value are peculiar to a few individuals of exceptional physical and psychical constitution. If all mankind had the scientific or the artistic disposition, it is clear that our judgment of the relative worth of moral and other attainments might be indefinitely modified. Thus there is nothing in the proposition that ethics is a theory of values which really militates against our claim that ethics is a purely empirical science. It is for empirical psychology to say what qualities are and what are not of "absolute" worth for human beings.[2]

The reader will perhaps have missed in the foregoing account of the ethical sentiments the terms "desire" and

[1] Plato, *Protagoras*, 322 C D.

[2] It is necessary to note that it is *not pleasure*, but *satisfaction*, by which the "worth" of a thing is measured. "Worth" or "value" only belongs to things in so far as they come up to certain pre-existing standards or satisfy certain pre-existing cravings. Hence the only creatures for whom experiences can be said to have worth are those who possess the ideal forms of psychical life, memory and anticipation. Hence also an experience which, though pleasurable, is in no respect a fulfilment of an anticipation, a realisation of an idea, cannot properly be said to have worth.

"will," which usually occupy so prominent a place in ethical discussions. We have spoken frequently of the pleasurable or painful anticipation of an experience, but have hardly mentioned the desiring or the willing of an experience. The absence of these expressions from our analysis has, of course, been intentional. Our object in avoiding them was to indicate our agreement with those psychologists who refuse to recognise "conation" as an original and unanalysable feature of experience by the side of cognition and feeling. As the "tripartite" analysis of experience into the aspects of cognition, feeling, and conation, though discarded by more than one eminent authority among recent psychologists, is still perhaps generally accepted, it is only right that we should briefly explain our reasons for dissatisfaction with it, and should indicate how the phenomena of "desire" and "will" are described in our own terminology. Our objection to the recognition of "conation" as equally primitive with cognition and feeling is, briefly, that all the phenomena described by the term, in so far as they belong to psychology at all, seem analysable into elements of cognition and feeling, and further, that "conation," as customarily described, seems to include something which is strictly speaking not psychological.

This will become clear if we consider any simple case of what is commonly known as "desire." In the simplest desires psychological analysis will show the presence of the two elements which we have regarded as essential to a "sentiment," the expectation of certain experiences and a feeling of pleasure or pain accompanying this expectation, So far, all that has happened is manifestly capable of description in terms of cognition and emotion alone. Where, then, does the new mental element, "conation" come into the process? Apparently, according to the believers in the "tripartite" character of mind, with the execution of movements adapted towards securing the experiences which are anticipated with pleasure or avoiding those anticipated with pain. It is the fact that anticipations lead to movements which have begotten the belief in "conation" as distinct from feeling and cognition. But "movement," from the strictly psychological point of view, is itself nothing but a succession of complex sensations—of sight, pressure, contact, etc.—accompanied by changes of feeling-tone.

For the physicist or the physiologist, of course, motion means something very different from a succession of sensations and feelings, but motion in the physicist's or physiologist's sense is not movement as actually experienced, but a mere abstraction from experience, a mere partial representation of a part of the full concrete experienced event. For the physicist motion means change of position, *i.e.* some part of what we *see* when we watch the movement of our limbs or of external objects; for the physiologist the movement of a limb is a matter of muscular contractions, *i.e.* once more something which, under certain conditions of experiment, we may see, but of which the infant beginning to move his limbs is profoundly ignorant, and would remain ignorant all his life long if there were no physiologists to enlighten him. If once we, as psychologists, free our notions of experienced movement from associations derived from physical and physiological sources, and confine ourselves to the description of what is actually perceived when a limb is moved, there seems to remain nothing but what can be successfully resolved into cognitive and emotional elements.

Stated in strictly psychological language, apart from physiological implications, the facts about "conation" are these. The pleasurable or painful expectations of certain experiences is regularly followed by a series of complex sensational and emotional states of a special kind (kinæsthetic sensations). Throughout the series thus set up the emotional tension arising from the conflict between the feelings awakened by the anticipation and those awakened by its continuance in the merely "ideal" form is constantly changing. In a case of successful "conation" the direction of the change is throughout negative; the emotional tension steadily decreases, until at last a final state is reached in which it becomes zero as the anticipated experience is actually enjoyed, in the case of pleasurable anticipation, or finally ceases to be anticipated, in the case of unpleasant anticipation. In an unsuccessful "conation" the process is of a more complicated kind. The emotional tension characteristic of the state of expectancy or anticipation does not in this case steadily diminish as the series of kinæsthetic experiences proceeds, but varies irregularly, now in the positive, now in the negative direction, and the final stage of the whole process is marked by the merging of the tension, not in the

pleasurable feelings which attend the fruition of anticipated satisfaction or the escape from anticipated harm, but in the intensely unpleasant feelings of disappointment and fatigue.

The above account represents, I think, pretty fairly the nature of successful and unsuccessful "conation," considered from the purely psychological point of view. By the aid of physiology we are enabled to complete our account of the whole psycho-physical process of desire by adding to what we have already said the consideration that the series of kinæsthetic sensations is, on the physiological side, identical, or if you prefer it, "concurrent," with the discharge of movements which are at first of a random kind, but become in the course of repetition more systematic and co-ordinated, and have throughout for their consequence the retention or repetition of an agreeable and the removal of a disagreeable stimulus. The process by which the random passes gradually over into the definite purposive movement may be described on the physiological side as one of formation of association paths in the higher nervous centres, on the psychological as one of formation of associations between the ideas of certain experiences in the way of the special sensations and certain other "kinæsthetic" ideas, which we know, though not from psychology, to be connected with the contractions of certain groups of muscles. There is, as I conceive, no case of desire and consequent movement adapted to secure the desired object that cannot be adequately represented, both on the physical and the psychical sides, by an account like the one just given, couched in terms, on the one hand, of ideas and feelings, and, on the other, of muscular contractions. The introduction of a special and peculiar aspect of mental life called "conation" into the psychology of desire seems therefore superfluous. If "conation" is something psychical, it will be identical with the peculiar combination of kinæsthetic sensations with varying emotional tension described above; if it is something more than this, it is apparently identical with muscular contraction, and is thus purely physiological.

Such a state of emotional tension or "craving" as we have described is itself a "desire" in the process of passing over into action. We may, if we like, retain the name "conation" to mark the fact that a strongly-toned anticipation regularly sets up such a sense of kinæsthetic experiences as we have

described; only in that case we must take notice that we are denoting by "conation" not a third and peculiar aspect of mental life distinct in kind from feeling and cognition, but a law regulating the formation of series of cognitive-emotional states. Adopting the convenient phraseology of Avenarius, we may say that every impulsive action may be represented as a "vital series," in which we may distinguish an initial, a median, and a final stage. Disregarding, for purposes of simplification, all forms of impulsive action except that in which the result attained is the realisation of a pleasurable anticipation, we may further describe the three stages of such a series as follows. The series opens with an initial stage in which vital equilibrium is disturbed by the emotional tension arising from the contrast between the pleasure of the anticipation and the unpleasantness of its non-realisation (the craving or desire proper); in the median stage of the process we have a succession of kinæsthetic states, accompanied by a steady diminution of the emotional tension and an increase of pleasant feeling; in the final stage the experience symbolised by the idea with which the series opened is realised, the emotional tension becomes zero, and the emotional tone consequently one of pure pleasure. Thus with the disappearance of the mental tension of anticipation equilibrium is once more restored, and the "vital series" comes to its close. Now in this "vital series" each term can, on its psychical side, be adequately represented as a combination of presentational with emotional (*i.e.* with pleasure-pain) elements; it is not in the character of the individual terms of the series, but in the *form* of the series as a whole, that the distinguishing marks of "conation" are to be found.

If, then, there is anything in the conative experience that cannot be analysed into sensation, idea, and emotion, this *tertium quid* must be something that is not to be found in the simpler forms of desire and consequent impulsive action, but only in the more developed forms of will and action from choice. If we are to accept the "tripartite" division of psychical phenomena, we ought to be able to show that in the adult human consciousness there is, between the desire or the examination of the alternative possibilities and the execution of the action decided upon, some stage interposed

which cannot be described in terms of cognitive or emotional process. We ought to be able to say with Professor Ladd in his recently published *Outlines of Descriptive Psychology* that the mental state expressed by the words "I will it," "it is my resolve," is so absolutely *sui generis* that it cannot possibly be represented in the terms which we have found adequate for the description of mere craving and mere impulsive action. Whether the facts are as Professor Ladd asserts is a matter upon which each of us must decide for himself after careful introspection; for my own part, I fail to find in my mental condition at the moment of forming a resolution anything which cannot be satisfactorily analysed into elements of a cognitive and of an emotional kind.

The state of mind commonly expressed by such phrases as "I'll do it" seems to be no more than the change of emotional direction and intensity and the corresponding change in organic sensation, effected by the transition from a state of mental conflict to one of such steady and continuous diminution of emotional tension as we have described in our analysis of the simple forms of impulsive action. The ideas of mutually exclusive courses of action have previously been alternately occupying the "centre of conciousness," and, by their alternating, have produced that very unpleasant irregular variation in the quality and intensity of the accompanying emotions which is characteristic of the state of "doubt" or "uncertainty"; now one of the alternatives is clearly present to the exclusion of the other, and becomes the first stage of such a "vital series" as we have already described. It is the feeling of relief, characteristic of this psychical change, which gives to the state expressed in the words "I'll do it" its special colouring. The introduction into the psychological analysis of this process of a new aspect of mental life seems to be a confusion due either to reminiscences of physiology or to metaphysical theories of "activity," or to both. For a "positive" or "descriptive" psychology, "will," as I take it, is simply a name for a peculiar form of "vital series," in which the individual terms are all complexes of pleasure-pain feeling and ideas with kinæsthetic sensations. Moreover, it is reasonable to argue that we only become

conscious of "conation" through the experience of thwarted "conation."[1]

It is specially important to keep these considerations in mind in reading popular expositions of psychology, which frequently speak as if the immediate object of "desire" and "will" were actually the execution of movement. We are said, in common parlance, to "will" the movements of our own limbs, and, in developed adult life, and in cases where a certain end can only be attained by a previous study of the processes required to bring it about, the statement is correct enough. In learning any new physical accomplishment, such as walking or piano-playing or cycling, we may, with sufficient accuracy, be said to will the requisite movements of leg or hand or arm, provided we take care to remember that, in strict parlance, it is not the physical combination of muscular contraction, but the kinæsthetic sensation, the peculiar "feel" of the movement, that we consciously anticipate and seek to bring about. But of the infant at the beginning of his career as an intelligent being even so much as this cannot be said. As Professor Baldwin has so unanswerably pointed out in his important work on *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, it is primarily not a movement, but the sensation secured by the movement, that is desired. When the child who has once tasted sugar "grabs" at a lump of the delicious stuff, it is not the movement of "grabbing" but the taste of the sugar that he proposes to himself to enjoy. The grabbing movement, in its first ill-co-ordinated forms, follows upon the sight of the sugar and a desire for a renewal of the pleasant taste in consequence of inherited physiological adaptation; it is only at the later stage when the movement has been repeated sometimes successfully, sometimes without result, that attention, in consequence of this lack of uniform success, comes to be diverted to the kinæsthetic sensations themselves.

In fact, the direct willing of movements, more accurately, of sensations of movement, only appears in human life as a transitory and intermediate episode. Our first instinctive

[1] The well-known fact that the encountering and surmounting of difficulties is in itself a source of great pleasure to many men seems to afford grounds against our theory. On that theory, the experiences in which the charm in question lies are precisely those changes in emotional tension of which we have spoken above.

and rudimentary movements are not "willed," nor, in the final stage of development, where the co-ordination of movements has become a matter of habit, are they willed either. It is only in the transitional stage, during which we are learning to co-ordinate our movements, that kinæsthetic sensations are directly attended to, anticipated or willed. The trained musician or craftsman is as absorbed in the anticipation of the results of movement and as oblivious of the sensations of movement themselves as the infant. In this fact, more than in any other, lies the truth of the familiar proverb that "habit" is "second nature."

These remarks will indicate, with sufficient clearness, the way in which the phenomena of "volition" may be described in accordance with our general psychological scheme. For the elementary condition of which all "volition" is only a more complicated form is that of "craving," and "craving,"[1] as we have already explained it, is just that state of highly emotional anticipation in which we have found the simplest phenomenon which can be recognised by psychology of moral action. The determination of the exact point at which such a craving or desire passes into an act of "will" seems to be a matter of philological rather than psychological interest, and need therefore not detain us from our argument. Some would, perhaps, say that desire becomes "will" at the point where it becomes necessary to anticipate not merely the experiences in which the vital series terminate (the *end* of action), but also the series of kinæsthetic sensations which must intervene between the final and initial stages of the process (the *means*); others may prefer to call no desire "will" unless it has been preceded by a condition of mental debate between alternatives (*choice*). For us the question has no importance, when once we have seen that "will," defined in either way, and "desire" itself are not simple but complex states, and have by the analysis of them into their component elements made it clear that a theory of moral sentiments must also be a theory of moral action.

The questions commonly raised about the "freedom" and

[1] "Craving" in the psychological sense must, of course, be distinguished from mere organic cravings such as hunger. Hunger does not become a "craving" in the psychological sense, *i.e.* a craving *for something*, until the unpleasant sensation is accompanied by some reminiscence of the objects which have in the past afforded nourishment.

the "autonomy" of "will" have, from our point of view, no psychological significance. The consideration of them belongs partly to that part of ethics which deals with the final problems arising out of the discussion of the moral ideal and moral progress, partly to the general metaphysical theory of causation. In so far as these questions depend upon ethical considerations, we shall have something to say about them in a later chapter, where we hope to discuss certain perplexing dilemmas connected with the notion of moral progress. Into the wider problems raised by the concept of causality it would be improper to enter in any detail in an essay like the present, and we shall consequently reserve the full exposition of any conclusions to which we may have come on those subjects for a more suitable occasion.[1]

[1] But see the supplementary note to chap. v.

CHAPTER IV

THE TYPES OF VIRTUE

> Nur zwei Tugenden giebt's ; o wären sie immer vereinigt,
> Immer die Güte auch gross, immer die Grösse auch gut !
> SCHILLER.

In our last chapter we attempted to construct, on a purely empirical basis, a psychological account of what may be called the formal characteristics of moral sentiment and action—approbation, obligation, responsibility, virtue, and merit. Our present chapter will be devoted rather to the consideration of some peculiarities in what we may call the material nature of morality. Now that we have seen what is meant in general by virtue and virtuous conduct, we propose to examine in outline some of the concrete types of behaviour which are recognised by the judgment of civilised men as praiseworthy, virtuous, and meritorious. The bearing of this examination upon the main topic of our essay is manifestly twofold. Indirectly, the discussion of types of virtue will help us to form an opinion of the claims of ethics to rank as a metaphysical science, by clearing the way for our coming account of the moral ideal. The examination will also be itself of direct service to us, inasmuch as it will of itself afford a preliminary answer to the question whether all moral action can be successfully referred to a common type. If ethics is rightly regarded as a body of inferences from finally true and valid metaphysical principles, we ought, according to the doctrine of our introductory chapter, to find in all the diversified forms of moral conduct the coherent and systematic development of a single type of behaviour; such inconsistencies and contra-

dictions as are to be found in the moral theory and conduct of mankind should be visibly of a merely incidental character, and should perceptibly tend to disappear as civilisation advances. If, on the other hand, our survey of the facts leads us to the conclusion that the forms of conduct recognised by civilised mankind as virtuous represent two or more radically divergent lines of development, and that there is no appearance of the elimination of this divergence by advance of civilisation, it will follow that ethics is a purely empirical and therefore essentially provisional and imperfect attempt to describe facts the ultimate relations of which to the whole scheme of existence cannot be apprehended by us.

Our discussion of egoism and altruism in connection with the primitive facts of the moral life has already prepared us to entertain as possible the notion that the latter of these alternatives may be the right one, and that there may be, in all our moral actions and judgments, radical and irreducible duality of development along diverging lines. The same conclusion will be still more forcibly pressed upon us in the course of the inquiry which awaits us. We shall find in the present chapter that this radical dualism affects all our ordinary ethical thought and action, and in subsequent chapters that it is no less present in the most philosophical theories we can construct of an ultimate moral ideal. If many modern moralists have failed to find this contradictoriness ingrained in the highest ideals of morality, the reason is probably that they have too much neglected such an inquiry as we now propose to undertake into the nature of those minor and subordinate ideals of conduct on which men have bestowed the specific names of individual virtues. In defiance of the salutary warnings of Bacon, too many of our moralists still hasten direct from their preliminary investigation of the formal characteristics of virtuous conduct to the establishment of the "highest generalisations" about the ultimate ideal, without bestowing more than a passing word of notice on the *axiomata media* of moral science. I mean the hypotheses involved in the current concepts of the typical virtues, justice, temperance, courage, and the rest. It is with these lesser ideals, these *axiomata media*, that we propose to deal in the course of the present chapter, with a view towards ascertaining

how far they may all be regarded as slightly varied types of one or two more general forms of conduct.

This inquiry, neglected, as we have said, by the moderns, was familiar enough to the ancient moralists of Greece. With them the question as to the ultimate coherency and consistency of moral ideals appears in the form, "Is virtue one or many?" *i.e.* are those leading types of conduct which we know as the "cardinal" virtues capable of being reduced to one still more ultimate general and all-embracing type or not? Both Plato and Aristotle decide, as might be expected from philosophers whose speculation was dominated by an intense faith in the systematic rationality of the universe, for the unity of the virtues, and the method by which the former established this result in the dialogue *Protagoras* is for us extremely instructive. His method of procedure is to take several of the popularly recognised virtues, and to show by a consideration of concrete cases of their exercise that the same act which is commonly regarded as an instance of one may equally well be treated as an instance of another. An act of self-control is at the same time a wise act and a brave act; cowardice and license are manifestly unwise and unjust.

It is clear that an inquiry into the unity of virtue pursued by this method amounts practically to a discussion of the question, "Which is the chief commandment?" Plato's procedure at least suggests the possibility of arranging the recognised moral virtues in a serial order of ascending importance. There will probably be some among the recognised virtues of which the characteristic "formula" is so narrow as to apply only to the small class of acts popularly regarded as instances of the virtue in question; there will probably be others with "formulæ" so comprehensive as to be applicable not merely to the special actions commonly recognised as exemplifying these virtues, but to the whole or nearly the whole of moral conduct. Chastity, for instance, is manifestly a virtue of the former kind, justice or truthfulness a virtue of the latter kind. There is nothing in the characteristic formula of chastity which applies to other acts than those which have to do with the gratification of the bodily appetites, nothing which would make it inconsistent for a person of perfect chastity to be avaricious, mean, untruthful, and unjust. The formulæ of justice and truthful-

ness, on the other hand, are of such universal sweep and comprehensiveness that you cannot be even moderately just or straightforward without at the same time possessing other virtues as well. For instance, though you may be at once chaste and unjust or deceitful, it is patent that the vast majority of acts of unchastity involve either injustice or untruthfulness towards some person or other. Adultery, for instance, is scarcely possible in a community ordered upon modern lines, apart from cruelty and deception, and even ordinary "looseness," such as is commonly regarded as compatible with a high standard of fair dealing and personal honour, seems in most cases to imply a degree of indifference as to the effects of your actions upon the ministers to your pleasures, such as would be regarded as gross cruelty or injustice if displayed towards any other class of persons. A man might make a resolution to live in chastity and adhere to his resolution through life without being in any other particular entitled to our respect; but a man who should resolve to be simply upright and just in his dealings would, it seems, in pursuance of his resolution, be compelled to earn considerable respect on the score of personal chastity also, or if this is not so, at least a man who had no other failing would exhibit the moral life in a less disorganised form than an "unjust" man. For this reason we should probably be justified in so far accepting the current code of conduct as to place chastity comparatively low and justice comparatively high in our ascending series of virtues.

By the application of the same method to the other generally recognised types of praiseworthy conduct, we shall in the end succeed in assigning to each its proper place in a scale in which those virtues which are most narrowly confined to one set of relations or one aspect of character occupy the lowest, and those which embrace most nearly the whole system of moral relations and most widely influence the moral character the highest place. If all the virtues can be satisfactorily arranged in a single serial order of this kind, we shall be warranted in drawing the inference that morality is really a single coherent systematic whole; if, on the other hand, we find that a single arrangement will not duly represent the facts, but that there are two or more highest types of virtuous

action, neither of which can be treated as a subordinate form of the other, we shall be driven to the conclusion that there is no single consistent moral ideal, and consequently that the science of morals must be of an empirical or provisional, not of a final or metaphysical kind.

We have thus before us in the present chapter two questions which, though closely related, are nevertheless distinct, and might conceivably be differently answered. The first question is, "Are the actions recognised as praiseworthy by civilised men capable of reduction to a single type?" The second, "If this is at present not the case, is there ground for holding that it will be so in an increasing degree as civilisation progresses?" The first question would be answered in the affirmative by all those moralists who find in any single concept, egoistic or altruistic—such, *e.g.*, as self-realisation or the service of others,—the key to ethics. The second might be answered affirmatively by thinkers who hold with Herbert Spencer that the egoistic and altruistic tendencies, though at present irreconcilable, will ultimately be adequately adjusted to one another by the natural working of the agencies which determine social evolution. From the standpoint of such thinkers it is clear that the expected adjustment could only be effected by the gradual elimination of those instincts which make for the preservation or gratification of the individual at the expense of future generations of the race. If all such tendencies are inconsistent with the permanence of the race, it is to be hoped, think these moralists, that, like other tendencies opposed to racial permanence, they will ultimately vanish in the progress of evolution. The ordinary conditions of survival, being unfavourable to a race of egoists, must make for the ultimate appearance of a type of beings whose highest satisfactions will be derived exclusively from such actions as conduce to racial permanence. Egoism would thus come in the end to be a mere disguise for altruism.

A similar result is arrived at, from very different premises, and by a different route, by egoistic moralists of the type of Nietzsche. According to these writers, true progress consists not in a growing adjustment of egoistic and altruistic tendencies, but in the final emancipation of the purely egoistic tendencies from the secular bonds of social and altruistic

feeling. Altruism is a pestilent delusion which has from the first dawn of civilisation fettered individual development, though it has been always recognised for the imposture that it is by the few men of real worth and genius who have hitherto escaped the prevailing corruption. The "overman" whose advent is foretold by Nietzsche will only come into being when the exposure of the altruistic delusion has become general among all men of genuine ability. Then with the disappearance of the "popularised Platonism" and "slave-morality" of the reigning religion and civilisation of Christendom, the individual will recover his right to follow his own line of development and secure his own enjoyment, unfettered by the enervating sentiments of benevolence and compassion, which serve only to check the actions of the strong and capable and to keep in existence the incapable and weak.

Ideas of this kind, expounded in philosophical form in the brilliant ethical writings of Nietzsche, seem to make their appearance in literature whenever civilisation and social organisation have reached the point at which their pressure is really felt by persons of originality and capacity. Plato has shown how prevalent and attractive they were in the Athens of the fourth century by his pictures of Thrasymachus and Callicles; in our own day they have been widely popularised by the literary influence of Baudelaire and Ibsen, to say nothing of lesser names, and seem to bid fair to be accepted for a time as a sort of ethical gospel by our clever reviewers, dramatists, and magazine writers. Some of this popularity is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the charm which paradox has always possessed for the half-educated mind, but something is also due to the justifiable revolt of capacity and intelligence against the well-meaning inconsistencies of current altruistic theory and the good-natured half-heartedness of current benevolent practice.[1]

The result of the discussions of this and the two following chapters will be to show that a negative answer must be given to both the questions which we have proposed at the beginning of the present section. Altruism and egoism, we shall contend, are divergent developments from the common psychological root of primitive ethical sentiment. Both developments are

[1] Compare the excellent description of the genesis of this train of thought in Plato, *Rep.* vii. pp. 538-39. R. L. Stevenson's "Fable of the Sick Man and the Fireman" wittily illustrates the inconsistency of our average "altruistic" theory and practice.

alike unavoidable, and each is ultimately irreconcilable with the other. Neither egoism nor altruism can be made the sole basis of moral theory without mutilation of the facts, nor can any higher category be discovered by the aid of which their rival claims may be finally adjusted. Such adjustment as is indispensable for moral practice will prove to be as indefensible in theory as it is necessary and convenient in action. Neither in theory nor in practice can we get on without both, yet no theory will enable us to say why or where the one is to be subordinated to the other, and in practice we only succeed in subordinating either on occasion because we do not wait for a consistent theory before we act.

These positions, if established, certainly amount to a confession that moral theory is hopelessly bankrupt when confronted with the demand of the philosophical intellect for ultimate consistency and system, but the bankruptcy is not peculiar to ethics. The current concepts of physical science, *e.g.* the atomistic theory of matter, the kinetic theory of gases, the undulatory theory of light, seem to involve assumptions no less inconsistent than those made by the moralist. It is apparently just as hard to reconcile, for instance, the inertness ascribed by physicists to matter with the phenomena of gravitation as to adjust the respective claims of self-realisation and self-sacrifice upon our moral allegiance.[1] The empirical sciences are, in fact, in the same position as many a commercial house of uncertain credit; so long as they are only called upon to meet current obligations as they arise they are solvent, but a sudden demand for immediate liquidation in full of all outstanding claims spells irremediable ruin.

I go on to illustrate these points in some detail from the character of the various special virtues commonly held in esteem among civilised men. As we have seen, the way is prepared for the future growth of egoism and altruism by the existence even in the infra-ethical world of a double set of instincts, those connected with self-preservation and those connected with reproduction. As even the rudiments of social as distinct from family organisation appear to be wanting

[1] Compare Stallo, *Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*, chap. ii. ("on the inertia of elements of mass").

among most of those higher animals of whose inner life we are able to form some conjectural notions, we may say that the analogue among them of the conflict between self-regarding and self-sacrificing ideals is a similar conflict between instincts which secure the preservation of the adult individual and instincts which secure the production and protection of the coming generation.[1] We do not, of course, forget that there is no necessary opposition in principle between the preservation of the individual and the perpetuation of the species. The same qualities which make for the protection of the individuals of one generation against competitors in the struggle for existence or against an unfavourable combination of physical conditions make also, in the majority of cases, for the success of the species in perpetuating itself throughout a series of generations. It is to the interest of the species as a whole, as well as to the interest of existing members of it, that the individuals should possess the instincts which lead to the securing of nourishment and the evasion or successful resistance of the attacks of enemies. And, of course, also on the whole the exercise of the reproductive functions is not only pleasant to the individual, but necessary for its health.

Yet, as has been already urged in the last chapter, there are numerous conjunctions in which the two sets of instincts come into collision, and on such occasions either the existing adult individual or the immature future generation has to be sacrificed.[2] As nature can dispense neither with the instinct of self-protection nor with those of sex and of parental affection, sometimes the one and sometimes the other must for the time be paramount. While it is clear that a species would soon cease to exist if its mature members were never to face pain, privation, and death in the interests of their young, it is equally clear that it would also cease to exist if the adults invariably put parental affection before self-preservation. A

[1] For some acute remarks on the absence from animal life of a true analogue of human society see L. F. Ward, *Outlines of Sociology*, p. 89, ff. Mr. Ward seems to me, however, to exaggerate the artificiality of human society. Still it is true that civilised society is a *machine*, a system of consciously devised arrangements for securing certain objects, as well as an organism, though the current reaction against the old "social contract" theories has blinded many modern philosophers to the fact. I should have owed something at this point to Mr. H. R. Marshall had his *Reason and Instinct* appeared when the above was written.

[2] Compare the risks run by the male spider in the act of generation, the dangers to which birds expose themselves at breeding time, the effect of brilliant colouring in making animals more visible to their enemies, etc.

certain amount of what in a human being would be selfishness is requisite among the higher species if the existing generation is not to perish before the next is capable of shifting for itself. Complete "altruism" would be as fatal to animal as we shall by and by see that it would be to human life. Hence it is necessary in the animal world that individuals should, on the one hand, be generally ready to expose themselves to pain and danger in defence of their offspring, but should, on the other, not expose themselves in this way beyond certain limits, which it is, of course, impossible to ascertain.

Now consider the way in which this same relation between two instinctive tendencies which may at any moment become antagonistic manifests itself first in the impulsive and afterwards in the deliberately purposive actions of human beings. It is not until action has passed into the stage of deliberate action from choice that it can properly be called either selfish or unselfish. So long as we are concerned only with the behaviour of the young and uncivilised, who are still in the main prone, without reflection on consequences or deliberation between alternatives, to follow the promptings of any and every pleasant or painful anticipation as soon as it arises, we can describe the phenomena before us in almost the same terms as are applicable to the case of animal instinct. The only difference seems to be that in the case of animal instinct, as in the case of the very earliest human actions, it is rather present sensation and perception than ideal anticipation which is endowed with the emotional colouring requisite to set the physiological machinery at work. The bird building its nest, the insect selecting the leaf upon which to deposit its eggs, are presumably not under the influence of *ideas* at all. Certain immediately present sensations or perceptions of sight, or smell, seem to be attended by powerful emotional accompaniments, and to set the bodily machinery working in a way predetermined by the inherited connections in the nervous system, without the excitation of anything that can properly be called expectation.[1]

It would, however, I suppose, be impossible to deny

[1] Some recent students, *e.g.* Bethe, in Pfluger's *Archiv*, vol. lxx., seem to call even this in doubt for insects, but on somewhat arbitrary grounds. The suggestion of Mr. Thorndike (*Animal Intelligence*, p. 73), that even the dog has "no ideas" appears less probable to me than it does even to its author.

that among the higher animals at any rate the workings of original instinct may be reinforced in consequence of past pleasant or painful experiences. With the cat, the horse, the dog, the lessons learned from experience seem to supplement or to counteract the effects of mere instinct. So far as this is so, we can hardly deny that we have in the higher animals at least the beginnings of the ideal form of experience, memory and expectation. It has sometimes been denied that a dog's signs of delight at seeing his master take down his hat and gloves are due to the expectation of a walk; but the denial has every appearance of being dictated by a preconceived theory of the nature of animal consciousness which has little to recommend it. To be consistent, those who deny expectation to the dog ought also to deny him memory. They ought, *e.g.*, to hold that the dog never really recognises his friends, and that all apparent tokens of pleasure in their society are the products of a physiological mechanism which has no counterpart in the animal's consciousness. If you go so far as to reduce an animal's life—with Professor Green—to a mere succession of disconnected sensations, there seems no reason why you should not go one step further and revive the Cartesian doctrine of animal automatism. We have, I think, no right to deny positively the existence of rudimentary ideal experiences even among the lower types of animal life.[1]

In the psychology of human beings it is clear that we have from a very early stage to deal with the existence of true "free" ideas, and consequently with more or less definite memories and anticipations of particular sequences of experiences in the way of sense-perception. Merely instinctive or impulsive action very early in the child's life begins to be overlaid by what we may call true "ideo-motor" action—action, that is, which is regularly preceded by the pleasant or painful anticipation of certain consequences. For anything we know to the contrary, the behaviour of the burnt child that dreads the fire may already be a case of such genuine ideo-motor activity,[2] following on a recollection of the previous experience

[1] Cf. Stout, *Analytic Psychology*, i. 51, though he draws the line between "noetic" and "anoetic" consciousness at a slightly different level.

[2] May I say here once for all, that when I use the word "activity" I imply no philosophical theory of "will," but understand simply any sequence of movement on the part of an animal of which the initial stage is a sensation or percept?

of burning. We have already said that all properly *ethical* action is primarily of this ideo-motor type. If in developed life we often attach epithets expressive of moral approbation and disapprobation to actions which seem to follow automatically upon certain sensational experiences without the intervention of the ideal process of anticipation, this is because all these actions are of the habitual, *i.e.* of the secondarily automatic type, and are conceived of as depending upon the series of past ideo-motor actions by which the habit has been contracted.

To put the same thought in slightly different language, we may say that all truly ethical conduct is, in the phraseology of Mr. Lester Ward, "telic,"—is determined by the more or less definite anticipation of an end or result. It is merely in the complexity and scope of this end, and the definiteness with which it is envisaged, that the systematic pursuit of a central purpose which characterises the moral life of the most intelligent members of civilised society, differs from the sporadic and unregulated behaviour of a child or a savage. The great function discharged by moral codes and social institutions in the practical, like that discharged by scientific hypotheses in the theoretical sphere, is that of acting as a vast labour-saving apparatus. What is, in both savage and civilised life, desirable from the individual point of view, is the continuous satisfaction, if not of all his anticipations, at least of the most permanent and persistent of them; what is desirable for the species, if we may so express ourselves, from Nature's point of view, is permanent self-maintenance, at the smallest cost of physical expenditure, against the unfavourable influences of a constantly changing environment; and it is just in the certainty and organic economy with which these results are obtained, that civilised life has the advantage over savage or semi-civilised life. Our inheritance of a vast system of scientific hypotheses and moral institutions makes it possible for us to obtain, with ease and without waste of energy, what can only be obtained by the savage by the essentially wasteful method of haphazard trial of various alternatives, which is also Nature's method in the infra-human world.[1] In particular,

[1] We must not, however, forget that in all but the lowest of human races, it is not merely self-maintenance against external influences, but an increased sense of power over the material and social environment, which the individual desires. Merely to "go on and not to die" is the ideal of the savage, and of the hacks and incom-

our social and moral institutions, like our scientific hypotheses, enable us to modify our environment to suit our own wants, instead of waiting for the environment gradually to modify ourselves, as the animal and, in a lesser degree, the savage have to wait. This is a difference which, as Mr. Ward well remarks, completely revolutionises the whole conditions of the evolutionary process, and makes it practically impossible for us to treat human development, and the growth of morality, which is a part of human development, as a mere subsection of the general history of biological evolution. In our penultimate chapter we shall see the enormous importance of this revolution in its bearing upon the theory of the ultimate moral ideal.

As we have already said, ideo-motor or "telic" action, at its first entrance upon the scene, is neither exclusively self-regarding nor exclusively altruistic. What actions we should approve, or anticipate with pleasure, must have depended originally upon the peculiar instincts which the human species possessed; and these in turn are determined by the general conditions of a successful struggle for existence in the period before the dawn of purposive intelligence. Like any other species which has to maintain itself at once against competitors in the struggle for existence and against unfavourable variations of the physical environment, the human species has naturally need both of the instincts which make for self-preservation, and those which make for the successful reproduction of the race. Thus, in the human species, from the very beginning of its career, there must have been present those possibilities of conflict between mutually exclusive courses of instinctive action which we have discovered in animal life as a whole. And, consequently, we should naturally expect to find, as is actually the case, that there are among the forms of behaviour approved of by even the most primitive of mankind some which secure, or are supposed to secure, advantages to the species or to the community at the expense of suffering and loss to the individual exhibiting them. Room is thus

petents of civilised society; what the man of genuine and conscious capacity seeks for himself is extended and amplified, not merely continued, existence. We might fairly ask whether the "will to might" of Nietzsche is not the one fundamentally human impulse, and the secret origin of the one fundamentally human institution, property.

made for the growth of deliberately self-regarding and consciously self-sacrificing types of conduct, as soon as the conceptions of myself and other selves are formed by the ordinary workings of the psychical mechanism. Both originate in a form of approbation which we have already called "impersonal," in consequence of the previous existence of a double set of instincts and impulses.

It must not, of course, be supposed that a hard and fast line can be drawn between one set of moral qualities which are purely "self-regarding," and another set which are exclusively "altruistic." As a matter of fact, the relations which we discovered in the infra-human hold good also in the human world. Just as the self-preservative instincts are no less valuable to the species than the reproductive and parental instincts, so, as a general rule, the same qualities and the same line of action which are productive of permanent satisfaction to the individual human being are also favourable to the permanence of the human species. There is scarcely a "self-regarding" quality which is not, in the great majority of circumstances, as beneficial to the community of which the individual is a member as it is to the individual himself. And the very existence of the sexual and parental—to say nothing of the weaker gregarious—instincts and feelings involves the consequence that habitual suppression of all lines of conduct by which the community benefits to the immediate loss of the individual would ultimately make against the individual's chances of securing permanent satisfaction for the most persistent and unconquerable of his own cravings.

Courage, for instance, was looked upon by Aristotle as a typical form of self-renunciation in the interests of the "city"; yet it is manifest that courage is, on the whole, as necessary for the continued enjoyment of the individual as it is for the protection of the community or the species against its rivals. From the very fact that the existence of the species or community has to be secured by the action of individuals of whose actions one main spring lies in the pleasurableness and painfulness of their own anticipations, it necessarily follows that there must, on the whole, be a harmony between the "egoistic" and the "altruistic" tendencies. A species of beings who did not in the main find their individual pleasures

in the performance of the same acts which make for the continued existence of their kind, would speedily fall a prey to their numerous rivals, and the same is, of course, true of the artificial communities of human society.

But we must not allow ourselves to be led into optimistic exaggerations about the degree of this "pre-established" harmony. The actual human world cannot be shown to be a true counterpart of the Leibnitzian system of monads, in which each member by fulfilling the law of its own development necessarily discharges the highest service to the development of all the rest. In the human as in the animal world there are constantly arising conjunctions of circumstances in which the attainment of permanent individual satisfaction is incompatible with the complete discharge of the actions required by the needs of the community or the species. The most striking example of this conflict is that which so powerfully impressed the imagination of Aristotle, the voluntary surrender of life on the field of battle from a sense of the obligation of sacrificing one's self for the good of the community. We have in this supreme self-surrender a phenomenon which must, in the present writer's judgment at least, present insuperable difficulties to the school of moralists who insist on regarding self-satisfaction in some form or other as the universal end of all moral action. There is no real parallel between the self-devotion of the citizen-soldier and the self-restraint of the enlightened egoist who chooses to forego a present satisfaction in order to obtain later on "higher" satisfactions—that is, satisfaction for more constantly recurring and unconditional cravings. The peculiarity of the case lies precisely in the fact that the self-devoted victim is, by his own deliberate act, cutting himself off from all possibility of future satisfactions of any kind. As Aristotle tells us, it is precisely the man of highest character and greatest public spirit to whom we should expect the sacrifice to be the most painful, just because his life is the richest and fullest in enjoyment. Just in proportion to the intellectual and artistic endowments of the patriotic citizen, what he gives up on the field of battle is a real "self."

And there can be for him, let us observe, no question of a compensation for what he loses. You may, of course, if you like, assert that the sacrifice will be compensated in another

life, but the assertion is incapable of proof. If it is permissible to argue from present conditions of existence, it would be more reasonable to suppose that self-surrender may be as much a feature of the "future life" as of the present. And if the argument from now to then be ruled out of court, your assertions about the future are a mere appeal to the unknown. In any case men have sacrificed and do sacrifice themselves who positively disbelieve in the future life, and have therefore no expectations whatever of compensation. It would be in vain, for instance, to argue that the brief satisfaction of dying with the assurance of victory is so intense as to outweigh the more numerous and permanent, though less intense satisfactions which are given up. For the dying soldier, if conscious at all, is, as a rule, too keenly conscious of his own physical sufferings to be able to enjoy the satisfaction of a sense of triumph. It is the favoured few only who are able in the death-agony to receive the intelligence of their country's success, and to die happy in the news. For the great majority of the slain, death in battle perhaps means a death of unrelieved pain. Might it be said, one shares by anticipation in the victory? But some would sacrifice themselves even if defeat were certain. And, in the citizen-soldier at least, we must not assume more than a spice of the mere lust of fighting "for the fun of the thing." Here, then, if anywhere, we have a genuine deliberate sacrifice of self with all its satisfactions, to a good in which the person making the sacrifice cannot expect to have any share.

Something of the same kind meets us in more than one form of devotion to the service of society or humanity. In the case of all those not uncommon persons who voluntarily abandon a life of intellectual and artistic self-culture in order to labour as missionaries, doctors, or hospital nurses among degraded and hostile populations, or to take up the thankless and onerous burdens of the public service, an unbiassed student cannot fail to perceive the existence of a self-sacrifice for which life affords no adequate personal compensation. It is, of course, easy to appeal, in the fashion of popular moralists, to the approbation of conscience as affording an ample reward for all that the self-denying servant of the public has given up; but the appeal betokens an ample lack of psychological

insight. It is only in edifying literature of a certain class that the man who has given up all to work for the benefit of his fellows is constantly being rewarded by the intense satisfaction with which he contemplates the success of his own virtuous exertions. In real life his "reward" is more often a burden of care and fatigue culminating in failure and enhanced by ingratitude. Even the successes over which outsiders go into raptures are apt to strike cold to the heart of their author who knows, as the outside world does not, how mean a proportion they bear to what he has projected.

Nor are matters much mended if you prefer to appeal to the pains of self-censure which the self-sacrificing labourer would have experienced if he had preferred ease and self-culture to public duty. Which of us has not learned by humiliating experiences how readily the shame and pain of knowingly shirking a duty can be merged in the enjoyment of the cultured ease which our neglect of our obligations has purchased? If personal self-satisfaction were indeed the sole end of our actions and the sole result anticipated by us from them with pleasure, it would be impossible to defend those acts of self-sacrifice which all the world agrees to regard as deserving of the highest degree of approbation. From "self-seeking" to disinterested benevolence there is no road, and the apparent subsumption of both under a common name by the theory of self-realisation, turns out on closer inspection to be little more than a piece of verbal legerdemain. In every life that is anywhere touched with ethical nobility there are sacrifices of self not a few for which no future personal compensation is expected or desired, and these sacrifices gain all their dignity and sacredness from our conviction that the causes and persons for whom they are made are not convenient or romantic *aliases* for ourselves.

On the other hand, you have to mutilate the facts of the moral life even more, in order to make them all appear as instances of altruistic devotion to others or to society, than is done by the self-realisers. "Self-love" as Shakespeare reminds us, is after all "not so vile a sin as self-neglecting." By agreeing to call anything in which I am interested myself you can, with some violence to language and some confusion of thought, continue to make all morality wear the shape of

self-satisfaction, but there is no conceivable device, short of boldly denying the facts, by which you can make it all look like self-surrender or self-forgetfulness. For we all notoriously approve, not only devotion to the interests of the community, but also determination to make the most of one's self; we censure as morally wrong not only neglect of public duty, but also neglect of mental and æsthetic self-culture. It is no doubt true that honest self-culture commonly ends by proving beneficial to a wider public. The artist who steadily keeps true to his own highest ideals of self-respecting work and steadily refuses to win popularity and bestow pleasure by complying with what he feels to be unworthy standards of taste, often succeeds ultimately in educating the tastes of the public; the labours of the scholar or man of science are commonly in various ways of direct or indirect benefit to the community of which he is a member. Yet who would be prepared to say that the only moral justification of the patient labour of artist or scholar is to be found in the remote influence he may possibly exercise upon the tastes and habits of other men? What excuse can be pleaded from the extreme altruistic point of view for the poet who chooses to give to the world "what the few must rather than what the many may like," or for the mathematician who devotes all the energies of a richly endowed nature to the production of a few score pages of obscure speculations which are very likely devoid of all practical significance, and will probably never be intelligible to more than three or four persons at once? Would our moral judgment of the worth of such a life of stubborn devotion to an artistic ideal as those of Beethoven and Wagner be other than it is, if those great men had not happened in the end to succeed in enlisting a considerable measure of popular admiration?

These may be said to be mere appeals *ad vulgus*, but the principle involved in them is an important one, and, once seriously apprehended, is fatal to our common unthinking altruism. It is this: If it is our duty to labour for the realisation of a certain type of mental life among our fellow-men, that life must be conceded to be in itself worthy, and if worthy, then deserving of attainment by ourselves. If certain states of thought and feeling are morally so valuable

as to be worth promoting at any cost among those around me, they are also worth promoting in myself, and it is my reasonable service to realise them for myself as well as for my neighbours. It is absurd to maintain that culture or knowledge or happiness is of such worth that it is a moral duty to promote it, and then to deny that it is a moral duty to seek it for myself. If altruism as a theory of morals were the whole truth, the only thing worth promoting in myself, or in any one else, ought to be the altruistic spirit; the logical consequence of accepting altruistic premises would be the inference that my one and only duty is to promote in my neighbour an unselfish determination to promote in his neighbour the determination to promote the same sentiments in some one else. Universal altruism would thus end in universal aimless absorption in the affairs of our neighbour's soul.

But if this absurd consequence is to be avoided, it must at least be recognised that certain mental states, other than a general benevolence towards one's neighbours, are in themselves of worth. In order to give benevolence itself a definite channel in which to work, it must at least be recognised that health is better than disease, fulness than hunger, knowledge than ignorance, and cultivated taste than vulgarity. And if any self is made richer in lasting satisfactions, and therefore morally worthier by the possession of these qualities, my own self must also be the richer and the better for their attainment. To put the whole case against "altruism" in the form of a dilemma, we may fairly ask: If nothing but unselfishness is morally valuable, why should I trouble about securing any other blessing than the spirit of unselfishness for my neighbours? If anything else is morally valuable, how shall I answer to my own conscience and to my God for neglecting its attainment in myself? It is not given to every one to acquiesce, after the manner of Kant, in a doctrine which asserts that it is a moral duty to promote in other men what it would be morally wrong to promote in yourself, nor, like him, to trust to the arrangements of a future life to abolish this standing contradiction.[1]

[1] One might precisely invert Kant's dictum with equal plausibility. For it might be said, I can more or less accurately tell what will make me happy; I am likely to blunder in deciding what will make my neighbour happy. Since then, on the Kantian

Thus a brief consideration of the logical alternatives of egoism and altruism brings us to the same conclusion to which we were led by our previous examination of the psychology of approbation. We found then that while the very existence of the instincts subservient to the propagation and protection of a future generation makes it possible for an individual to approve of actions by which the species or community benefits at the cost of pain and loss to himself, it is also possible for the tribe or society as a whole to approve of qualities such as physical beauty, poetical gifts, etc., which are of no visible public service, or are only of public service *because* they are already approved of. We are thus prepared to find that there is a double line of moral development. On the one hand, whatever makes the individual's life richer in the enjoyment of those qualities which are the objects of approbation must be admitted to have direct moral worth: on the other hand, approbation and moral worth attach equally to qualities of character and lines of conduct, by which the wellbeing of the community gains at the expense of the individual.

You thus get two more or less diverging and incompatible ethical ideals. On the one hand a man may set himself, as we say, to make the most of himself. That is, he may, as far as possible, seek to bring order into his own moral life by aiming systematically at the fullest possible qualification of those cravings which he finds to yield permanent and unconditional satisfaction, to the exclusion or repression of all indulgences which are incompatible with this ideal. The first great principle of a life lived on this plan might be formulated in familiar language thus, "Know what you really want, and see that you get it, without being deluded by spurious substitutes." The ultimate aim of a life of conformity to this precept would be the enjoyment of an experience as rich as possible in satisfactions of every kind, and free from the discontent and mental anarchy which result from the undue preference of those satisfactions which are neither

assumption, every one knows at once where the path of duty lies, it is surely wiser to aim at making my neighbour virtuous than to play Providence for his benefit. And if it be urged that you cannot tell when another man's virtue is real, I reply, that it is about as difficult to say when another man's happiness is real. If it is true that we may make a hypocritical pretence to virtue, it is equally true that we may and often do counterfeit happiness.

lasting nor unconditional. Such a life would manifestly be self-centred, but at the same time would be very far from being one of luxury or self-indulgence in the ordinary sense of those words. The very postulate that the most lasting and unconditional satisfactions are to be preferred would, as Plato has irrefutably shown in the ninth book of the *Republic* and elsewhere, mean that the pleasures of intellectual activity and æsthetic culture should take precedence over those of ordinary sensual appetite.[1] Nay it would be perfectly logical for one who accepted the principle of self-culture without reservation to lead by preference a life of rigid stoic asceticism. For it is only by a process of rigid self-discipline and careful subordination of passing cravings to permanent needs that a man can ever succeed in getting what on the whole he really wants out of life. Self-culture is only to be attained by the deliberate and unhesitating surrender of some at least of the discordant elements which constituted the untrained and disorderly self with which the process of cultivation began.

Against this ideal of self-culture we may, however, with equal right set the ideal of social service. For some of the things for which we care and which we approve are other than personal states of satisfaction. We desire not only a certain type of enjoyment[2] for ourselves, but also a similar type of enjoyable existence for other members of the community or the race. And this social ideal is often not to be realised except by the surrender of what we most desire for ourselves. We may thus, every one of us, be called upon in the course of our life for acts of self-sacrifice which go much deeper than the self-discipline of the cultivated egoist, who only gives up what he cares about for the moment in order to get what will afford him lasting contentment.[3] In true self-sacrifice, as distinguished from mere self-discipline, we

[1] Or at least *such* "sensual appetite" as could stand this test would be more than mere appetite.

[2] I use the word, of course, in its widest possible sense to include the pleasures of action as well as those of repose. The results of our third chapter would justify the Socratic preference for the former class of pleasures as against the latter, independently of any question of "quantity." For it is in the pleasure of action *par excellence* that we obtain *satisfaction* for previously felt wants.

[3] I do not of course mean by the phrase "lasting contentment" to countenance the mistake of placing true happiness in any permanent or unchanging state of consciousness. "Lasting contentment" is merely a convenient abbreviation for "the steady progressive satisfaction of an organised system of persistent wants."

give up, without hope of compensation, what would yield us lasting enjoyment, in order that some other person may enjoy.

Now the point upon which I wish here to lay special stress is that, as I have already said, these two ideas are manifestly not entirely compatible with each other, and at the same time that there is no more ultimate principle by the light of which their rival claims on our allegiance can be adjusted. For the most part, no doubt, in a well-organised society, the same line of conduct serves to promote the realisation of the individualistic and of the social ideals. On the whole, in making the best of ourselves, we are also to the best of our power contributing to the happiness of society. But the agreement is after all far from absolute, and may, at any moment, be disturbed by an unusually stringent demand of obedience from either side. In a time of social disorder, for instance, any man may have to choose once and for all between abandoning the task of self-culture or impersonal scientific research and neglecting the duty of assisting to maintain social order or national existence. And in such a case, it seems impossible to decide universally that the claim of either ideal should be paramount. Is Hegel, for instance, to go on with the *Phänomenologie* while German national life is being extinguished by the cannon at Jena, or to shoulder his musket and do what he can to repel the invader?

To questions of this kind it seems impossible to give a single satisfactory answer. Most men would be agreed that these are occasions when the duty of protecting society becomes so imperative that all considerations of self-culture must be set aside; most men again would admit that there are limits to the claims of society; but who can say what these limits are? In practice we seem to effect a more or less satisfactory compromise between the competing ideals only because we do not stop to reason out their respective claims upon us. As soon as you come to state reasons for espousing one side or the other of the alternatives, there seems to be considerations of equal cogency to be adduced on both sides. Your country's national existence will be imperilled, says one, unless you and other citizens sacrifice everything else to the duty of defending her. Yes, the retort

might be, And if I fall in the task, who will complete my philosophy? But surely, urges the first speaker, a philosophy which will at best afford intellectual satisfaction to a few score persons, ought not to be preferred before institutions which secure the comfort and happiness of millions. Why not, says the other, when one comes to consider quality as well as quantity of existence? it is good that knowledge should be in the world, even though the number of persons capable of possessing it be insignificant. And thus the dispute might continue interminably, were it not that the necessities of our situation as a rule compel us to decide on our line of action without a complete investigation of the arguments which can be alleged for or against it.

Hegel's remark that there is something sophistical in the interminable search for "grounds" or "reasons" is certainly applicable to all cases of appeal for guidance in determining the limits of self-sacrifice to ethical first principles.[1] Even if we imagine the case of a man who should deliberately preserve his own life by neglect of what would generally be regarded by others as obvious public duty, it would be difficult to find valid theoretical arguments against such conduct which could not be met by equally valid ones on the part of a consistent and conscientious egoist. One can imagine the unending wordy strife. You ought not to have run away from the battle, or ought not to have declined to stand for Parliament. But I think my life of self-culture or of research too valuable to be thrown away upon the pursuit of party ends which will give no satisfaction to me, and are of doubtful value to any one. But the public generally regard your conduct as cowardly and self-indulgent, and will not fail upon opportunity to make you sensible of their opinion. What then? *populus me sibilat at mihi plaudo.* Am I to dread the censure of an ignorant and unthinking public more than the condemnation I shall incur from my own conscience by proving false to my

[1] Hegel, *Logik*, ii. 1. iii. B. b, Anmerkung (*Works*, iv. p. 103). I transcribe the main part of the passage on account of its intrinsic interest.

"That search after *grounds* which constitutes the special characteristic of discursive reasoning (*raisonnement*) is thus an unending backward and forward process (*Herum-treiben*) which comes to no final determination. Several excellent grounds can be found for anything, or for its opposite, and a multitude of grounds may exist without any result. What Socrates and Plato call sophistry is nothing other than this reasoning from grounds; Plato contrasts with it the contemplation of the Idea, *i.e.* of the thing in and for itself, or in its Notion."

own highest ideals of a life in which every talent and faculty I possess finds adequate employment? And so the dispute might go on without possibility of being ended except by the voluntary withdrawal of the more impatient of the parties from so unedifying a discussion.

In practice we do not of course attempt to think these things out, but take now the egoistic now the altruistic line, as our personal disposition or the circumstances of the particular case incline us. In such rules as we find it convenient to make for our own practical guidance, the intellect desirous of strict logic will find nothing but utter confusion and unprincipled compromise. For instance, I ought to devote part of my income to purposes of benevolence, and again ought not, by unrestricted munificence, to leave myself without the means of acquiring adequate personal self-culture. But what degree of personal self-culture *is* adequate? Or again, I ought to devote some part of my energies to the voluntary discharge of municipal duties, but not so much as to interfere with the prosecution of philosophical studies to which I have given myself, rather because I look to them for satisfaction of my personal craving for intellectual certainty than because of any benefit which I expect them to confer on other people who, after all, must answer their own questions in their own way. But *how much* of my time and energies may I devote to the solution of my intellectual difficulties without incurring the reproach of selfish indifference to my social responsibilities?

These are questions which we should find it practically impossible to answer, were it not that they are in the main answered for us in a convenient way, though on no perceptible principle, by the social customs of our day and class. In the main I take so much time, and no more nor less, from my philosophic studies for purposes of civic duty because it is what is expected of me by my social circle; I restrict my philanthropic expenditure within certain limits because my society expects me to come up to a certain standard of physical, intellectual, or æsthetic self-culture. If I am a man of sufficient originality of mind and strength of character to be discontented with the traditional compromise, it is pretty certain that my notion of the relative importance of self-culture and social benevolence will lay me open to the censure

of society either for undue self-absorption or for undue self-neglect, or not impossibly for both at once.

As a matter of general ethical theory it seems impossible to say anything more definite than this. No normal human being is likely ever to find satisfaction either in mere self-culture or in pure self-sacrifice. Any ethical theory which means to take serious account of the whole body of the phenomena of the moral life must therefore recognise "egoistic" duties and virtues by the side of "altruistic" duties and virtues, but no theory can satisfactorily adjust the claims of the two.[1] Such further consideration as it may be necessary to give to problems connected with the conflict between the claims of self and society will now be deferred to a subsequent chapter. We proceed to illustrate the influence of the moral dualism just described upon the formation of the concepts of the particular virtues commonly recognised in civilised society.

After what has just been urged we shall be prepared to find that it is impossible to give a single answer to the question, What is the highest type of virtue? This question has often been asked, and has received very various answers in different moral and religious systems. In ancient times Plato, and less positively Aristotle,[2] and in modern times Höffding, have asserted that it is in *justice* that we find the fullest and most satisfactory realisation of the common principle of all moral action. Geulincx or Kant, if pressed for an answer, would probably have decided for obedience to law. The influence of the Christian religion has induced man to treat at one time personal chastity, at another universal benevolence, as the all-including virtue. While yet again there have been minds to which all virtue has appeared as some form or other of courage. It will be abundantly plain that we cannot, upon our premisses, agree entirely with any one of these attempts to bring all moral action under a single type. We shall expect to find, corresponding to the egoistic and the altruistic ideals, two most general or highest categories by the aid of which all moral conduct can be satisfactorily described. There will be some highest and most ultimate formula describing the

[1] Ethics, to parody Mr. Bradley, consists mostly in finding bad reasons for being what you cannot help being.

[2] *ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ συλληβδην πᾶσ' ἀρετὴ ἔνι.* Arist. *Ethics*, 1129 b 29; Höffding, *Ethik*, p. 124.

class of virtuous actions in which the end proposed is the benefit of society at large, or certain members of it other than ourselves, and another formula describing the moral actions which have direct relation to the enrichment of our own personal experience with sources of permanent and lasting satisfaction.

The highest and most perfect expression of the principles of moral altruism seems to be found in that law of *justice* which bids us treat every member of the whole community with just so much consideration and perform for him just such services as are most desirable in view of the good of the community as a whole.[1] Justice is often opposed, as the minimum of unselfishness compatible with good moral character, to the higher virtues of benevolence, generosity, charity; but when it is remembered that the true ethical measure of the consideration due to any particular person is nothing other than the good of the whole society as it may be affected both in his person and in those of others who may be incidentally affected by our treatment of him, and further that, from the standpoint of rigid ethical justice, our own personal claims to consideration must be determined by the same impartial standards as those of any third person, it will become clear that true justice includes in itself all self-sacrifice except what is manifestly on any theory to be condemned, the futile flinging away of ourselves in gratifying the unreasonable desires of the worthless.[2] The formula of this ideal justice in apportioning enjoyments would be, "Every one to count for as

[1] By the *good* of the community, as of the individual, I mean lasting and unconditional satisfaction. My standard is thus the psychological one of *feeling*, not the biological one of function. I reserve discussions on this subject for a later chapter.

[2] It would perhaps not be unjust to christen the morality here repudiated "Tolstoyism."

Justice may be defined formally (as Mr. Bradley defined it in *Ethical Studies*, p. 191, footnote) as adhering in your treatment of people to the rule you profess to go by. True or "ideal" justice, however, as he there admits, implies that you go by the rule of the morally *right*. What that rule is I have tried to indicate in the text. Ideal justice in this highest sense takes neither a man's *deserts*, as they are popularly called, nor his *needs*, as popularly estimated, as the exclusive standard by which his treatment is to be decided. Considerations of social good may demand that I should exert myself to perform good offices for a man who has not, as we phrase it, *deserved* any special regard from me by past services to me. So again, when the good of the community as a whole is made the standard, mercy may be the highest justice. On the other hand, it may be bad for the community as a whole that distress should be relieved in certain cases. *E.g.* if charity to the idle acts as an inducement to idleness, it is not in the highest sense of the word just to bestow it. It is clear from what is said in the text that even the sacrifice of my life may be demanded from me by justice when it is a necessary step towards securing the permanent peace and content of the community.

much as and for no more than that to which his place in the general scheme of the community entitles him."

The familiar political and judicial maxim that "every one should count for one and nobody for more than one" is manifestly only a special case of this more general ethical principle. In matters in which every one is of equal importance to the community, every one *will* count as one and as no more; in cases where the fate of a single person may outweigh in its influence upon the good of the community that of thousands of others, every one does *not* and ought not to count as one. It is only just that the murderer of a poor and insignificant person should be punished equally with the murderer of a person of rank and wealth, because it is on the whole equally detrimental to the interests of society that murder should be rife in one class as in another; it is no less just that there should be exceptionally severe penalties attached to offences against the person of the supreme magistrate or the heir to the throne, because the harm done to the fabric of society by the commission of these offences would be immeasurably greater than if they had been perpetrated upon some private sufferer.[1] It is thus the general needs of society, not the particular needs nor ever the particular deserts of the individual, which determine what is, in his case, the measure of true justice. It is only by gross misapprehension as to what really is the good of the whole community that the maxim *Salus imperii summa lex* can be perverted into a justification of tyranny and crime.[2]

So much for the supreme principle of that type of moral action in which the satisfaction of a whole community is the object actually contemplated by the agent. If we turn to the other side of the question and ask what is the fullest and

[1] It will be remembered that even conduct which is in ordinary cases punishable only by the infliction of pecuniary damages is treated by the English law as a capital crime when practised upon the queen-consort or the wife of the heir-apparent. This is quite consistent with the principle of true justice as explained in the text.

[2] It only becomes so when *Salus imperii* is taken to meet the personal or class interests of the persons exercising the functions of government. We may on a later page have opportunity for discussing the question how far the growth of an European civilisation which is essentially international should modify the traditional and Hellenic view of patriotism as the highest form of virtue. Our definition of *justice* has purposely abstained from identifying the "community" with any political organisation such as the "state." The patriot may for the present, if he likes, read our definition in the light of that identification; the "humanitarian" is at liberty, pending future discussion, to understand by the "community" any wider society he pleases. But see what is said a few sentences lower down.

clearest form in which the principle of self-culture or self-realisation finds recognition in popular moral theory, it is less easy to formulate a satisfactory answer. There seems to be no one name in our language for the quality of knowing what it is that you most desire to get for yourself and setting yourself resolutely to obtain it. We might perhaps call such a quality the virtue of self-consistency, or again of intellectual clarity. With Plato, who insists strongly upon the close analogy between the regulation and subordination of passing desires to a general life-purpose and the maintenance of social subordination and order, this virtue shares with the more directly social tendencies the name of *justice*. Yet it is clear that systematic self-realisation may lead a man into actions inconsistent with the principles of justice as we have already described them. In your determination to "do yourself justice" you may find it impossible to make sacrifices which the general interest of the community of which you are a member demands of you, and which are therefore in the proper sense of the word eminently "just." Or on the other hand, you may be so anxious to secure results which you believe to be of value to the community as to neglect voluntarily the opportunities of doing full "justice" to your own powers and capabilities of intellectual or physical development.[1]

And what is true of the relation between the individual and the wider community of which he forms a part is also true of the relation between narrower and wider social groups. Just as a man must often do himself less than justice if he is to be just to the claims of family or country, so a family has often to choose between its own good and that of the country, and, with the growth of the sense of international or even world-wide relationship between man and man, it may become necessary even for a nation to choose at times between national advantages and the general interests of civilisation.[2] And in all these cases of conflict there is no recognised ultimate moral principle upon which a decision might be based. Every one would agree that, where the advantages to be gained are equal,

[1] Cf. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 172 ff.

[2] Though, of course, in most cases the interests of civilised humanity as a whole and those of a great civilised nation will probably be the same. It is hard to believe the dissolution of the British Empire, for instance, could ever be called for by the good of civilisation.

it is reasonable to prefer the good of the wider whole; but who is to say whether a great benefit to a family or a nation should or should not be preferred to a lesser benefit conferred upon a nation or upon civilised mankind at large? The illustration is the more worth pondering since there are persons who, though regarding it as self-evident that it is immoral to prefer any personal satisfaction, however great, to the satisfaction of others, very naturally though inconsistently refuse to extend their conclusion to the case of the relation between a single nation and the whole body of civilised communities.

The sum then of the whole matter seems to be just this: There are two ideals of conduct, both sanctioned by the approbation of mankind, which are not finally completely reconcilable, and between which individuals and communities are constantly driven to choose,—the ideals, as we may call them, of intensiveness and of extensiveness. You may set yourself to make some comparatively narrow area of experience, your own, that of your family, etc., as full of permanent and lasting satisfactions as you can, or you may set yourself to procure a lower degree of permanency and certainty of satisfaction for a larger community. In other words, you may live either for the realisation of a very high type of mental culture by yourself, or a few others closely connected with you by circumstances or by community of taste, or for the more general diffusion of a much lower type. You may make the most of yourself and your immediate circle, or you may make a little of your fellows in general. Both types of activity are necessary to the progress of civilisation, and it is impossible on ground of ethical theory to assert that either is to be preferred before the other. The course of any normal life, in so far as it is marked by definite moral purpose, presents us with a series of theoretically unjustifiable compromises between the two.

The examination of any of the principal forms of "virtue" will support this conclusion by showing that we have in the lines popularly drawn between moral and immoral conduct a series of attempts to effect such a compromise between the often incompatible demands of justice to others and a due regard for completeness of individual self-culture. I do not mean that it would be possible to classify some of the current

virtues as self-regarding merely and others as exclusively altruistic. The truth is rather that both these aspects of morality are imperfectly combined in our ordinary notions as to the line of conduct prescribed by any one of the subordinate virtues. Exclusive regard whether to considerations of self-discipline or of justice to others would, in most cases, lead to a widely different classification of acts as moral and immoral from any which at present prevail among civilised persons. Chastity, for instance, or the payment of debts, or the speaking of truth, would find a place alike in a scheme of morality based on purely altruistic considerations, and in one based upon considerations of personal honour and self-consistency of development, but the standard of chastity or truthfulness would be different in the one scheme from what it would be in the other, and different in both from what it is in our present system of morality.

This will, perhaps, be made clearer by the more detailed examination of one or two examples. We may, for instance, profitably consider for a few moments the principles involved in the recognition of the law of strict personal chastity. It is, of course, notorious that there has been historically more variation from one civilisation to another, and even from one stage in the same social development to another, with respect to the degree of license permitted in sexual matters than in almost any other point of morality. Still it would be generally admitted that, according to the most civilised and highest moral standard, all indulgence in sexual relationships is, in ordinary cases, to be condemned beyond that covered by monogamous marriage. As immoral we have therefore to regard (1) all acts whatever of perverted sexual appetite, (2) all gratifications of normal sexual appetite except between persons who have placed themselves publicly[1] in a certain peculiar relation to each other such that it excludes the

[1] I do not say "legally"—because the absence of a *legal* contract does not seem to affect the moral character of the relation provided it receives the public recognition of the society of which the parties are members. Among the first Quakers, if I am not mistaken, a strictly legal marriage was impossible owing to their conscientious objection to the religious formulæ which were until recently a necessary accompaniment of the legal contract. In their case the demand of morality for a public recognition of the assumption of the relations of marriage was met by a simple declaration before a general gathering of members of the sect. And no Romanist would regard an *illegal* marriage as *ipso facto* no marriage at all. See for the facts Charles Lamb's letter on *Unitarian Protests*.

simultaneous contraction of the same relation with any other party, and cannot be dissolved without forfeiting social approbation, except with the concurrence of the community. Individual dissatisfaction has indeed frequently led to the demand that these latter restrictions should be relaxed, either by permitting the simultaneous contraction of more than one such relation, or by allowing the relation to be dissolved at any time upon the mere consent of the parties, or even at the pleasure of one of them; but the general opinion of the mass of persons of high moral character seems at present unmistakably against either change. There can be little doubt that Jowett expressed the sentiments of all but a minority of intelligent men in declaring that monogamous marriage is a great ethical gain to mankind out of which we cannot afford to let ourselves be argued by a sentimental poet.

Assuming, then, the general recognition of the standard just described, let us ask how far that standard agrees with those that would follow from an exclusive application, either of the principle of self-culture, or of that of social justice. It is eminently clear on reflection that even in the interests of mere self-culture, some standard of personal chastity would have to be insisted upon. Random gratification of any and every passing craving of appetite would be absolutely incompatible with the self-discipline apart from which no high level of individual self-culture is attainable. Of course, the degree to which irregular indulgence of the sexual appetite is inconsistent with successful self-cultivation varies with the original endowments of each individual, and the special character of the kind of culture he is anxious to attain. But in every case some sort of self-restraint seems inevitable. This follows partly from the fact upon which we have already dwelt, that permanent satisfaction is only to be obtained by the strict subordination of those cravings which fail to yield lasting and progressive enjoyment to those which, as more successful in this respect, have more "worth."

It is on this aspect of the case that Plato is particularly apt to expatiate, when he is urging the need of sobriety and chastity for the happy life. The cravings of appetite, as he is never tired of telling us, scarcely permit of anything that can be called "satisfaction." You

may still them for the time by compliance, but they are always ready on slight provocation to burst out afresh in all their old vigour. Unlike the life of intellectual activity in which every fresh mental acquisition, besides being in itself a source of satisfaction, leads on to an ultimate succession of future acquisitions, the life of sensual indulgence is one weary unprogressive round of alternate craving and satiety. It is a sort of hateful see-saw in which you can only rise as high as you are willing to sink low. The psycho-physical organism reaps no lasting gain from these continual oscillations, and they are therefore not true or real satisfactions.[1] Judged by the only standard which an intelligent Hedonism can use to gauge the relative value of satisfactions, the standard of permanence, the intensest pleasures of appetite, rank very low down in the Hedonic scale.

Hence too it comes about that no man of any considerable degree of intelligence can be finally contented with a life which is a mere round of sensual enjoyments.[2] There is no lasting source of satisfaction which you can successfully pursue unless you are ready to sacrifice to it these gratifications of mere random appetite. In any life marked by steady and definite pursuit of any ideal of self-culture whatsoever, the appetites and their gratification can, from the nature of the case, fill no greater part than that of being subordinate and episodical relaxations in the intervals of the serious quest after the sources of perennial content. To raise them to any higher rank is to turn life into something merely blind and aimless, a self-defeating pursuit of the non-existent. Moreover, one might add, apart from their own barrenness of lasting satisfaction, the appetites cannot be indiscriminately indulged without leading to the formation of a general slackness and irregularity of living, which is hostile

[1] Even the professed amorist, when he is more than an imbecile, requires the excitement of the chase and the struggle of wit against wit to make his pleasures palatable. Few men, other than imbeciles, would care, however dissolute they might be, for the easy triumphs enjoyed by the third Calendar and other heroes of Arabian story.

[2] It might be objected to Plato that the strictly *moderate* indulgence of bodily appetite is necessary for health, and, as thus serving to keep the organism free from unwholesome accretions, does permanently act beneficially upon its general tone. With respect to any degree of indulgence beyond that requisite to health, Plato's argument surely holds good. *Such* indulgence represents no gain, or a disproportionately small one, and is therefore contrary to the supreme law of organic economy.

to the cherishing of any strenuous purpose, selfish or otherwise. For this reason, as well as for the other, no one who sets before himself any high ideal of self-culture can afford to dispense with a very real discipline of the passions. Habits of loose self-indulgence once contracted are not unlikely to prove fatal to those other habits of industry, and order, and steady application upon which all successful self-cultivation depends.

Thus we can see that, apart from all considerations of justice to others, and of the effects of our actions upon them, the mere self-centred purpose of attaining the self-culture of the profound scholar or the supreme artist would of itself prevent a man from making sensual gratification more than a passing and episodical feature of his life. Merely in the interest of our own mental growth, we are constrained to practise up to a certain point the virtue of chastity. But once more, it is equally clear that the restrictions imposed on the gratification of appetite by regard for our own self-cultivation would be in many ways less stringent than those demanded by the law of chastity, as that law is interpreted by the best moral opinion of our age. On the grounds already indicated, regard for our own happiness would lead us to condemn such continuous indulgence in loose and vulgar amours as might be incompatible with the steady and unremitting pursuit of the objects in which we expect to find lasting and unconditional satisfaction. It is not so clear that it would lead us to censure equally the occasional formation of temporary connections of even the most animal kind, provided that they were treated as mere intervals for relaxation and not as the serious business of life. And, as a matter of fact, I suppose we all know of men whose standard of self-cultivation, artistic or intellectual, is high, and their devotion to their intellectual or artistic life sincere, who yet seem to be able from time to time to permit themselves to engage in commonplace debauchery without being perceptibly hindered in the pursuit of their more serious purposes. From the purely self-regarding point of view it is difficult, if not impossible, to pronounce upon the relaxations of such men the condemnation which ordinary Christian morality holds that they deserve.

Again, since wholesale deception and lying seems scarcely compatible with any high ideal of self-culture,[1] a purely self-regarding morality would probably have to condemn the vast majority of cases of adultery, as well as all cases of what is called "seduction." In these cases self-indulgence is complicated with a good deal of hypocrisy and lying, for the purpose of deceiving either the other party to the sexual relation or persons connected with that party, and they would therefore be immoral from the point of view of any one who felt that lying and cheating were a personal disgrace to himself and a stain on his manhood. Cases of permanent extra-matrimonial connections where no one is deceived, and there is no pretence at concealment or only a transparent one, would, however, as far as I can see, escape without censure on these grounds. Lastly, while on purely self-regarding grounds we should have to condemn any sexual relations, even within the limits of monogamous marriage, if they were felt by the persons contracting them to stand in the way of their own full mental development,[2] we should hardly be justified in censuring the most irregular connections so long as there was evidence that they were really acting as an educational influence upon the parties forming them.

Thus a sexual morality based solely upon the principle of truth to one's own truest self would be in a few cases, where marriage ties would mean arrest of intellectual activity, stricter; but in a vast majority of cases where irregular indulgence would not cause any interference with self-culture, laxer than the morality which at present prevails, in theory at least, among civilised men. The chastity of a man who was chaste only because not to be so would interfere with his pursuit of some intellectual ideal, would amount to a very considerable restraint upon the gratifications of appetite; it would clearly not amount to that absolute suppression of it, except within the limits of monogamous marriage, which is to-day expected

[1] Lying seems incompatible with self-culture, because a lie is a conscious confession of our own impotence. We lie because we are not strong enough—"cannot afford," as the phrase goes, to speak the truth. In so far as we succeed in developing a character strong enough to have permanent control over the sources which yield us the satisfactions we have set our hearts on, we do not need to lie.

[2] From the standpoint of a merely self-centred ethics, it would surely be as great a sin for the artist or student who really believed that "wife and children" did "drag him down" to be false to his calling by taking a wife as by keeping a mistress.

of the virtuous man. It would lead him at the most to avoid relationships involving a course of falsehood and perjury, and connections which might become serious hindrances to his consistent pursuit of the highest and completest culture within his reach. It would not forbid either a strictly limited indulgence in loose temporary amours, nor the formation of more lasting irregular ties by which his personal intellectual development was likely to be advanced.

Now let us, with more brevity, examine the results which would follow from the exclusive adoption of the principle of social justice as the basis of a doctrine of sexual morality. It is clear that, on the whole, the dictates of justice require a more stringent suppression of animal craving than would be demanded merely in the interests of unhampered self-development. To begin with, it is palpable that in all but the most exceptional cases, adultery, not to speak of "seduction," involves gross disregard of the claims of other persons to full and free self-development. It is in some cases the adulteress, in others the injured family, who are degraded by the act of the adulterer into the position of mere victims of his determination to enrich his own life with every possible form of satisfaction at any cost to the rest of mankind. The adulteress, for instance, is called upon in consequence of her breach with social conventions to forego the society of the intellectual and refined, and along with it all opportunities of attaining those forms of mental culture which directly depend upon the mutual co-operation of numbers animated by a common spirit and purpose. In forfeiting her position in society and her self-respect, she sinks into an existence devoid of any high and strenuously-pursued ideal of self-cultivation, and becomes a contented or discontented plaything and minister to the relaxations of another. Or at best, where the misconduct is so carefully concealed as to lead to no public scandal and loss of social position, she becomes familiarised with habits of intrigue and deceit which must eventually sap the foundations of personal self-respect and destroy the very possibility of consistent and unremitting pursuit of the highest ideals of culture. Such a sacrifice of the possibilities of permanent satisfaction as is implied in this acceptance of the position of a mere minister to another's pleasure cannot consistently be

demanded from any woman by a man who recognises the just claim of other persons to make as much of their own talents and opportunities as he of his.

Again, the vast majority of such unsentimental temporary connections as might be admissible from the standpoint of purely egoistic self-culture will fall equally with cases of adultery under the condemnation of true justice. It is scarcely necessary even to call attention to the fact that by claiming the right to these temporary indulgences you would be maintaining your right to condemn a whole class of human beings to the aimless and meaningless life of mere hired ministers to the pleasures of yourself and others like-minded with you. Setting on one side all that can be said of the degradation and pollution inseparable from the existence of such a class, the thought of the mere purposelessness and joylessness of the routine life led by the professional "*fille de joie*" should be sufficient to convince us of the utter impossibility of reconciling even occasional loose debauchery with the principles of social justice.

So far, then, the restrictions imposed upon the gratification of sexual desire by regard for the principles of justice would be more stringent than those which would arise from mere prudent considerations of self-interest, inasmuch as justice seems to exert from us an entire abstinence from such gratifications, except upon conditions which leave it open to both parties to make their connection with each other harmonise with the possibility of full personal self-development, *i.e.*, practically except within the limits of monogamous and, in normal cases, lifelong marriage. The only point at which the requirements of "justice" seem less rigorous than those of self-culture is the case of a marriage or other lifelong connection based upon mutual respect and affection, but not conducive to the attainment of the very highest self-culture. Consideration of the unfavourable influence which absorption in family cares and ties may exercise upon my pursuit of my professional studies, or more generally upon my scientific, literary, artistic, or political work, may forbid me to contract relations in which my affections would otherwise find an outlet against which no objections could be urged on grounds of social justice. It is not perhaps altogether

true that "wife and children drag an artist down"; in many cases the artist's faculties seem to be quickened and his capacity for work increased by the sense of the new responsibilities engendered by marriage and parentage; but it is clear that if a man is really convinced that permanent family ties would degrade him to the position of a mere hack condemned to produce for the sake of his wife and children hasty and vulgar work which he knows to be unworthy of him, he may owe it to himself to keep aloof from all such entangling connections. It might even conceivably be his duty in the pursuit of his ideal of culture to act with considerable harshness towards persons whose attractions exposed him to the danger of such entanglements. It is perhaps unjust, when one has imperceptibly got into a false position of this kind, to sacrifice a woman's heart to one's art or one's public work;[1] but before you can say that it is not equally immoral to sacrifice art or public work to a woman's happiness, you must be prepared to maintain, as I for one am not, that mere justice is the whole of morality.

If it is not altogether manifest that morality in such cases requires the sacrifice of justice to loyalty to self, it is at any rate abundantly clear that morality, in its aspect of chastity, frequently demands the sacrifice of self to the just claims of others. This follows at once from the admission we have just made that justice requires entire abstinence from those one-sided sexual connections in which one party purchases relaxation at the cost of degrading the other into a mere hired minister to his pleasures. In an artificial society like our own this demand cannot but press very heavily upon the average male member at any rate of those middle classes by whom the intellectual work of society is mostly done. As education becomes more general in any community, there must be a constant corresponding increase in the number of its members who find themselves compelled to depend for maintenance upon the practice of one or other of the learned professions, the possession of a Government appointment, or some other occupation of an intellectual kind. Consequently, unless the whole conditions of existence should be transformed by some radical social

[1] The public—to judge from its criticism of Goethe's treatment of Frederika among other things—seems to be strongly of this opinion.

revolution, it must constantly be becoming more difficult, in a progressive society, for the persons who support themselves by intellectual exertion to obtain early in life a remuneration sufficient to support a wife and family in a manner compatible with refined taste or even with the social requirements of professional status.[1] For the average professional man this means that the sexual instincts and the affections and emotions connected with them must either be entirely repressed throughout the very period of life in which they are naturally most vigorous or else indulged in ways which are, as we have seen, inconsistent with elementary principles of social justice. Except in specially favourable cases, the conditions of subsistence are making it increasingly imperative upon the professional classes to remain celibate up to an age at which the labouring population, who are free to follow the dictates of their own physical and psychical nature, are commonly the parents of fair-sized families.

In a different connection we might reasonably point out the probable loss caused by these unnatural social conditions to the community considered as a whole; at present what we wish to insist upon is that the restraint thus rendered necessary is normally injurious to the full development of the individual. In view of the currency of various sentimental delusions about the moral nobility of virginity and celibacy, we cannot too strongly insist that virginity and celibacy are, from the point of view of the individual organism, states of arrested development, and are therefore in themselves bad. So far as virginity is really beautiful to the eye of sound insight, it is so for the same reason as infancy, because it is known to be a transient condition destined in the order of nature to give place to something more perfect. The charm of virginity lies in the promise of maternity, just as the charm of babyhood in the promise of manhood. Lifelong sterility, whether regarded physiologically or psychologically, is as unattractive as lifelong childhood. There is a substratum of sound sense even in the buffoonery of Parolles (*All's Well*, i. 1). The joyless profligacy of the harlot is a melancholy enough feature of our social life,

[1] The increasing competition of women for posts hitherto held exclusively by men seems likely to aggravate the difficulty. If the demand of women to be allowed to support themselves promised to lead to the creation on a large scale of new departments of intellectual activity, the case might be reversed.

but it might be questioned whether the enforced sterility of the nun is not even more pitiable. One might be tempted to ask whether the ithyphallic emblems of antiquity were not in spirit less obscene and less of a crime against humanity, than the withered and flat-bosomed Madonnas of the cheap "Catholic" print shops. And a humane man might be excused if the sight of the hideous conventual garb led him to say to the champions of certain forms of religion, "For centuries you have had at your disposal the best qualities of civilised womanhood to mould into what you would. And *this*, by your own avowal, is the best you can make of the material, this sexless life out of which all the graces and tender affections that are the charm and glory of womanhood have been, as effectually as was in your power, crushed and extirpated! With what face can you ask us, when we look on this, to do anything that would increase your hold on the masculine half of humanity that, thanks to the kindness of Providence, or if you like to call it so, to the unregeneracy of human nature, has hitherto never payed you more than a divided and reluctant submission?" We may at least say of the common seducer who brings a girl on to the streets and the clerical seducer who inveigles her into "vows of chastity" in a nunnery, as Johnson said of Voltaire and Rousseau, that "it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them."[1]

Further notice that the life of the virgin or celibate is as imperfect psychologically as it is physiologically. Lifelong contented virginity is only possible when there is an original physical and psychical defect. The entire absence of sexual desire seems for the most part to be connected not only with bodily malformation, but with general psychical defectiveness of intellectual and emotional development. Indeed, when one considers how subtly sexual emotions can be found by careful observation pervading our sympathetic as well as our æsthetic sentiments, one would be surprised if the asexual type of mind were not for the most part marked by deficiency of moral and artistic perception. And even in those rarer cases where sexual feeling appears to be absent without any other noticeable psychological defect, the mental life of the

[1] I need hardly observe that I am here speaking of virginity embraced solely for its own sake, not of the sacrifice of family ties and affections to a career of philanthropic activity, which is quite another thing.

sexually abnormal person must be pronounced morally the poorer and less worthy for its lack of the vast body of experiences connected with the higher and more intellectual developments of conjugal and parental affection.

In the case of the normally constituted person the evil effects of enforced virginity continued after the period of physical and mental ripeness are so patent as to be absolutely undeniable. To take the very lowest point of view, there can be, I suppose, no doubt that such complete chastity as the principle of social justice demands from the average young professional man is injurious to bodily health, and consequently a source of vague but deep-seated organic discomfort which frequently issues in impaired intellectual work and a tone of general moroseness and dissatisfaction. If we take into consideration further the psychical consequences of the wholesale suppression of those more cultivated emotions which, in the majority of men of taste and education, form a larger part of the feelings aroused by sex than the mere animal appetite upon which they are ultimately based, the mischief done by enforced abstinence from sexual relations will become even more apparent. It is not merely that the necessity of suppressing the affections and emotions which would find their natural outlet in connection with sexualties brings with it inevitable mental division and dissatisfaction; besides this, the cravings which are denied their natural satisfaction avenge themselves by developing into a morbid and unhappy propensity towards dwelling in thought upon the enjoyments which are forbidden or impossible in fact. It is impossible to observe the unwholesome minuteness of treatment accorded to sins of the flesh in works of casuistry composed by celibate priests without feeling that the explanation of so unpleasing a phenomenon is to be found in the unhappy and uneasy yearning of a nature which ecclesiastical consecrations are impotent to alter after the physical and mental satisfactions which circumstances have put hopelessly beyond its reach. You cannot arbitrarily mutilate human nature by the forcible suppression of a group of the most primitive instincts and all the sentiments based upon them, without at the same time introducing deep-seated disharmony and division into what you leave behind. It is only in the lowest ranks of

organic beings that a creature continues to live after it has been cut in half.

I have stated the case against strict chastity thus strongly, not from any desire to apologise for laxity of practice, but because it seems to me that we have, in the case of such chastity as is demanded by the ethical judgment of the best modern men, a duty which cannot, without self-stultification, be made out to be one of self-realisation or self-development. Such self-restraint as is imposed by the consistent pursuit of any fixed ideal is no doubt, though not itself "self-realisation," at least a necessary condition of self-realisation. But abstinence which goes beyond such provident self-restraint is a real physical and psychical sacrifice which must be justified, if at all, by a direct appeal to the claims of others. Chastity demands that certain feelings and emotions which would otherwise have as much right to development as any other part of our nature shall be, where the conditions of life make monogamous marriage impossible, suppressed, without any expectation of personal compensation, in the interests of those who would otherwise have to pay the price of our indulgence. It calls upon us thus not merely to forego satisfactions, but to take upon ourselves, if needs be, physical discomfort and mental discontent, to reconcile ourselves to the surrender of part of our own claims to full and lasting satisfaction in order that a worse thing may not befall other members of our social circle. We were therefore fully justified in instancing it as one of those virtues which afford an example of the practical necessity of a compromise and the theoretical inevitability of a conflict between two ultimately irreconcilable types of moral purpose. It is not based solely or merely upon principles of social justice, for it is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to others, yet, except for the sake of others, it would not be reasonable to demand so stringent a standard of self-repression. Any high degree of personal chastity involves the frequent subordination of the desire for complete personal self-realisation to the desire to deal fairly and justly by others; and there are also, as we have seen, some cases in which abstention from domestic ties may be demanded by loyalty to self at the cost even of another's happiness. Both the principle of social justice and that of self-realisation find

exemplification in the moral sentiments of mankind upon the subject of personal chastity, and between the two there is, here as elsewhere, a conflict which cannot be decided by appeal to any principle more ultimate and authoritative than either.

We should meet with similar results were we to submit to detailed examination the principles which govern the theory and practice of conscientious men in any other department of moral conduct. There is probably no single virtue of all those recognised by popular nomenclature which can be satisfactorily accounted for by either the requirements of full self-development or of social justice considered by themselves. Truth-speaking, for instance, is a case in point. It is easy to see that to a very large extent social justice alone would necessitate a high standard of personal veracity. The object of lying is for the most part to secure our own personal ends by the circumvention of the rest of mankind; in other words, to gain free scope for our own personal self-development by adroitly checking the free self-development of other people. The lie is a typical example of the methods by which other persons are temporarily degraded into the position of mere instruments and means towards ends in which they are not intended to share. Hence the radical absurdity and inconsistency of the liar's conduct. The liar, if he is to gain any advantage by his lying, must assume that the rest of mankind will not meet him with his own weapons. He is to be treated by them as entitled equally with themselves to the pursuit of free self-development, while he treats them as mere instruments of purposes in which they have no interests. Hence, too, the resentment which, as Plato observes, every one feels at deception practised upon himself. The deceived person feels that in being duped he is for the nonce being treated, as we say, like a "tool," instead of being sought after as an intelligent and equal co-operator. It is for this reason that men invariably resent deception, even when it has been practised in what the deceived believed to be their interests.

Again lying, as a tacit confession of one's own weakness, is inevitably distasteful to a vigorous personality with a lofty standard of self-culture, even when it seems most necessary

for personal ends. The lie is essentially a circuitous way to one's goal, and the strong natures habitually prefer the directest roads. So that, in general, truth-speaking is demanded both by loyalty to a high standard of personal self-respect and by social justice. One may hate the lie because it is an infringement of the claims of others, or because it reveals weakness and inconsistency within the self. Yet here, as in the former case, there are all the materials for an irreconcilable conflict between the two types of moral purpose. You may be placed in such a position that you must either deceive or forfeit the objects of a life's labour or even life itself. Or again you may be so circumstanced that you can only serve the interests of your country by uttering a diplomatic falsehood which you feel as a personal disgrace.

Nor, as far as I can see, are there any ultimate grounds for a decision in either of these moral dilemmas. I cannot agree with Polonius that a man who is true to himself must be incapable of falsehood to the world. Admired as the lines in which this sentiment is conveyed are, I cannot but think that Shakespeare showed deeper insight than most commentators suspect by placing them in the mouth of a dotard whose superficial show of wordly wisdom is but a transparent disguise for an infinite ignorance of the minds of those who stood next to him. The reflection, in its indiscriminate generality, is worthy of the man whose sententious folly brought, by a hateful fate, so noble a mind as Hamlet's to its undoing. Generally true the maxim may be, universally true it surely is not. There are times when to be false to another may be the highest loyalty to self, when the spoken "lie" may be the only alternative to falsehood and treason to one's highest ideals.

There is, on this point, apparently a pitiful want of clearness of thought in much of our popular moralising. It is not uncommon to see it argued, as recently in an able article in the *Spectator*, that while you may lie with a good conscience to keep a friend's confidence, you must not deviate by one hair's-breadth from literal accuracy of statement to save yourself from ruin and death. The writers who maintain this view generally abstain from producing the grounds for their decision; wisely so, as I

think. For to what moral principle could we appeal to prove that there are no ideals of self-culture of such worth as to justify a departure from general rules which is supposed to be allowable to protect a friend from even slight inconvenience? It is no doubt true that it would be highly immoral to lie for the sake of avoiding every trifling inconvenience, and in practice it is safest to err on the side of over-truthfulness in one's own concerns. But this is only to say that a lie is never allowable except in cases where you feel it to be not merely allowable but obligatory. It is quite another thing to say that *no* personal satisfactions, however lasting and unconditional, are such as to make that a duty which quite minor satisfactions accruing to some other person may render obligatory. For my own part I can find no warrant for bidding any man rate himself and his own capabilities of lasting satisfaction so low as the theory demands, and in practice I do not think a man will be in much danger of becoming a liar so long as he is resolved never to depart from the truth except when the good to be gained, whether for another or for himself, is so great that he dare not throw it away to escape the distastefulness of saying that which is not.[1]

As to the other point there seems to be a general consensus of opinion. Few would deny that in cases where the public safety can only be gained by deceit practised towards an enemy a man may be not only justified in falsehood but be morally obliged to resort to it. And most men would probably disapprove of the conduct of a friend who preferred to betray their secrets rather than to wound his own self-esteem by the utterance of a false statement. And one may

[1] No one would seriously blame a prisoner of war for using deception to procure his escape—unless, indeed, he has previously given his parole, in which case the violation of the law of justice is obviously greater. And as a man is not always the chief sufferer by his own ruin or death the distinction drawn by the writer in the *Spectator* would not always be available for practice. As a typical instance of the cases where it seems at least arguable that it is permissible to save one's life by a lie we might take the situation of an English prisoner offered by a Mohammedan captor the choice between Islam and death. Of course it would be most immoral for a man who believed Islam to be a devilish delusion to save himself by professing conversion; but it is not clear that we could censure a man who believed all religions to be equally false for accepting life on such terms. Is a man called on to suffer martyrdom rather than exchange one faith in which he does not believe for another in which he does not believe either? On the other hand, can we censure as an immoral throwing away of life the action of a man who prefers death to the simulation at his captor's orders of a religious conviction which he does not feel?

wonder how many readers of the *Heart of Midlothian* would have blamed Jeanie Deans if she had made use even of perjury to save an innocent life from the clutches of a monstrous and shameful law. The stickler for exact veracity in this last case would apparently be bound to take his stand upon the principle of loyalty to self. It is more than doubtful whether, from the point of view of social justice, it is better that no witness should perjure himself than that the certainty that witnesses will perjure themselves should lead to the abolition of laws so outrageous as that under which Effie Deans was condemned. The one tolerable argument for truth-speaking in such a case is therefore the one Scott has, with a just instinct, made prominent: "If you do not speak the truth you will imperil your soul." But what if one chooses to risk one's soul for the sake of saving another person from unmerited ignominy and death? Can the choice be shown to be in every case morally unreasonable? Let the reader ask himself, by way of reaching a decision, the question already suggested in a former chapter. Would our approbation of Shakespeare's Isabella stand the test if Claudio had not alienated our sympathies by playing the coward? Yet, on the other hand, you could not say universally that it is immoral *not* to lie or to perjure yourself whenever the happiness or life of some other person is at stake. Once again we seem thrown back upon a conflict between the claims of loyalty to self and the claims of justice to others for which there is no satisfactory theoretical solution.

Note once more that the conflict between opposing principles of duty which seems inevitably to arise the moment you insist upon treating *any* ordinary moral maxim as universally valid, is more than that mere conflict between alternative forms of self-realisation which has to be recognised by the most thoroughly egoistic of moral systems. In the case of truth, as in the case of chastity, we find ourselves face to face with at least the possibility of a direct conflict between the duty of self-realisation and the duty of self-sacrifice in the interests not of our own future and more solid happiness, but of some one else. And once more it seems impossible in this as in other cases to lay down any

general principle as to when the claims of self and when the claims of others should be paramount.

A great deal will no doubt depend upon the quality and quantity of the personal satisfaction which is at stake. One can hardly say in general whether it is right for a man to sacrifice himself in certain circumstances for others until one knows something as to the character of the self which would be given up by the act of sacrifice. It would seem reasonable that a self with very little individuality of character and hardly distinguishable in quality from twenty thousand others should be sacrificed upon considerations which would not justify the impoverishing of the species by the loss of a self of rare and unique capacity. For we must remember that it is not only by our acts of self-sacrifice, but also by our own personal attainments and realisations of self, that we make the world as a whole richer and fuller of meaning by our presence in it. The poet or painter who feels himself to be "the eye through which the Universe beholds itself and knows itself divine," may reasonably hold that the whole corporate life of the planetary system is the richer for his power of vision even though his poems or his pictures should never teach a single human being beside himself to see with his eyes. Even the less obviously inspired mathematician might without excess of vanity be allowed to doubt whether he should hazard the loss of his life at the moment when he is on the verge of discoveries that promise to open a new field to human analysis for the sake of results to others which might more than justify the sacrifice of a self not so incapable of being replaced. To take one or two prominent examples from imaginative literature, we all admire the courage and devotion which led Mr. Meredith's hero to plunge into the water after the drowning boy, but we also cannot help sympathising with the Earl of Romfrey and Dr. Shrapnel in resenting the utter wastefulness of the sacrifice and the insignificance of the results.[1] And though we cannot help recoiling from the selfish conduct of Mrs. Stevenson's Dr. Grierson when, in the famine-stricken

[1] "This is what we have in exchange for Beauchamp! It was not uttered, but it was visible in the blank stare at one another of the two men who loved Beauchamp, after they had examined the insignificant bit of mudbank life remaining in the world in the place of him."—*Beauchamp's Career*, ad fin.

Mormon encampment, he is detected in keeping a private supply of nourishment and in appropriating the blanket of the insensible girl, it is easier to denounce the action than to answer his apology for it.[1]

I am not appealing to such instances as these to justify practical heartlessness and selfishness, but to show how great and how unanswerable are the problems which beset you in the region of morality whenever you seek to get very far below the current surface and conventional views as to what is and what is not duty. What I am protesting against is, on the one hand, the easy superficial doctrine that there are no real and final acts of self-sacrifice, and, on the other, the equally superficial glorification of a kind of self-sacrifice which, as Mr. Bradley has well said, is often no more than "the 'great sacrifice' of trade, the giving up cheap what is worth nothing." My position, if I may be allowed for the sake of emphasis to repeat former explanations, is this: If you are going to take morality in earnest, you will undoubtedly be called on, time and again, to sacrifice yourself for others, and equally undoubtedly you will sometimes have to sacrifice others to yourself. Neither line of action can be said to be universally more moral or more admirable than the other. In practice, fortunately, established usage and current social tradition have so far decided for us, in the majority of cases of conflict, that we act for the one end or the other impulsively and without having to embark on an intellectual balancing of the arguments for and against either course, which might go on interminably.

Though our illustrations of these insoluble moral perplexities have been drawn almost exclusively from one or two types of virtuous conduct, the reader will, I think, find little difficulty in extending the line of argument followed in our discussion of chastity and truthfulness to other cases. Indeed, if we are right in holding that social justice, as the

[1] *The Dynamiter*, p. 32 (ed. 1895). "Let me tell you, were all this caravan to perish, the world would but be lightened of a weight. These are but human insects, pullulating, thick as May-flies, in the slums of European cities, whom I have myself plucked from degradation and misery, from the dung-heap and gin-palace door. And you compare their lives with mine!" It is, of course, easy enough to say that the habit of self-sacrifice is of greater moral worth than any of the qualities which may seem, on occasion, to be sacrificed without result. But is this reflection quite as intellectually satisfying as it is easy and obvious?

highest type of altruistic conduct, embraces in itself the modes of action characteristic of all the lesser social virtues, our main thesis has already been demonstrated by our examination of the claim of social justice universally to override, in cases of conflict, the requirements of personal development in self-culture. The principle of our contention is indeed simplicity itself, and when once it has been clearly apprehended, the ingenuity of the reader will find no lack of concrete illustrations of it in all the varied departments of practical life.

It will perhaps be worth our while to consider one or two methods by which a believer in the existence of a single supreme moral principle might attempt to turn the edge of the preceding criticisms. There is an exceedingly obvious, but, as I think, exceedingly unjust, retort which might be made to us both by the metaphysical egoists—I mean, of course, the Hegelian egoists of the school of Green—and by the evolutionary altruists. We may expect to be told by both these schools of moralists that our arguments throughout the present chapter are vitiated by the unphilosophical abstraction from one another of the individual and his environment. It is not true, we shall be reminded, that there is any real opposition between the individual and the society of which he is a member. The individual is himself a product of the social environment as well as a factor in its perpetuation. In obtaining permanent satisfaction for his own bodily and mental needs he is at the same time discharging the functions which belong to his social position. Even with regard to the satisfaction of mere physical cravings this can easily seem to be the case. As we said ourselves in a former chapter, the individual, in securing the means of adequate nourishment for himself, is also fitting himself to be the propagator of a new generation, and in reproducing his kind he is also discharging a function the due exercise of which is necessary for his own complete health.

In regard to the relation of the complex aims and purposes of the civilised individual to civilised society it will be urged that the same considerations are even more obviously true. No man liveth or dieth merely to himself; in acquiring scientific knowledge or in producing a work of art, the individual follower of science or art is, at the same time,

accumulating information or creating things of beauty which will in the future be available for the profit or the delight of a whole society. Nay, even the scholar who never formally gives to the world any *magnum opus* of erudition, the man of taste who is content merely to appreciate existing works of art without adding to their number or even contributing to æsthetic theory, by their unconscious influence upon the thought, habits, and ideals of their social circle, however small it may be, do in the end help to raise the general standard of taste and to quicken the general interest in learning. Thus even the most placidly self-centred of lives may indirectly prove of considerable social service. And, on the other hand, all self-sacrifice has at least the value for the individual of moral training and self-discipline. Whatever he loses by his readiness to surrender command over the sources of self-cultivation for the sake of direct social activity, he at least gains in self-knowledge and self-mastery, which may not unreasonably be held to be qualities of as much value to himself as all that it has cost him to acquire them. We ought, therefore, to regard the moral world not as a scene of constant indecisive conflict between opposing principles, but as a fully orderly and finally coherent "universe of ends," so constructed that all self-sacrifice is after all only veiled self-completion, and all self-cultivation but an indirect method of social service.

It will be manifest from previous discussions that we are far from denying all validity to arguments of this kind. We have already ourselves insisted very strongly that, in the majority of cases, the path of self-cultivation and the path of social service coincide. And we are, of course, ready to admit as fully as our critics that no human life can be so self-centred as not to have some effects upon general social development, or so self-sacrificing as not to derive some elements of individual self-completeness from a career of unremitting social service. But that harmony between self-completion and self-surrender is full and entire we cannot on our principles concede for a moment. As against the theory that the gain in individual self-mastery which accrues to the self-sacrificing character really makes up for all that has been surrendered we have simply to ask the following question:

Do you mean that the mere will to sacrifice one's self is the one quality of supreme value to the individual, and the one and sufficient element of full and perfect self-completion which the career of self-sacrifice secures? If you do, you seem to be in the same state of mental confusion as the sick man in Stevenson's fable, who thought it obvious that the strong ought to be rescued from a burning house rather than the weak, because they are of more service in the world, and at the same time that the proper service of the strong is to help the weak.[1] If you do not mean this, we believe ourselves to have refuted you sufficiently already in what we have said about the cost which the individual has constantly to pay for his devotion to the principles of social justice.

And as against the reverse contention that you cannot cultivate yourself without at the same time cultivating others, what we have to urge is just this. What you say is all very true, so far as it goes, but it is at best only half the truth. You cannot, it is true, help yourself without ultimately helping others more or less, but the relative extent to which the self-centred life and the self-sacrificing life help others is by no means the same; and further, the benefit the community at large reap from your life of secluded self-cultivation may be utterly incommensurate with the price they have paid for it. Supposing I am in doubt whether to devote an ample fortune to the direct service of the public in ways which are certain to bring very considerable satisfactions to a large number of persons (endowing a hospital or a free library, for instance), or to the securing for myself of a life of lettered ease, I may fairly claim that in either case other persons will be the better for my exertions, but it is mere hypocrisy to assert that they will be as much the better in the second case as in the first. You may set yourself either to promote the full and complete satisfaction of all the intellectual, æsthetic, and physical needs of a relatively narrow section of society (yourself or your immediate circle), or to promote the partial satisfaction of the more elementary needs of a larger class, but you cannot do both at once to an equal extent.

[1] *Fables*, No. 3, "The Sick Man and the Fireman." The vagaries of sentimental altruism must often have tempted the reflective student of moral theory to endorse the Fireman's verdict: "I could forgive you being sick . . . but I cannot bear your being such a fool."

Not even a metaphysical moralist can succeed permanently in serving with equal devotion two masters, himself and his fellows. It is just because one has to serve two masters in the course of one's moral life that the best of men, if they are intellectually keen-witted, seem to find morality profoundly unsatisfactory.

To both forms of this double fallacy one may make a common rejoinder which really goes to the root of the matter. The morality of an action has to be estimated not merely by the results achieved by it, but by the results anticipated from it by the agent; it is a matter not of mere consequences but of purposes. A man may make it his purpose to secure a certain kind of experience for himself, and in the course of securing it he may incidentally fulfil certain social functions, but, unless the discharge of those functions was contemplated by the agent as part of the result of his course of life, you cannot fairly take them into account in estimating his moral worth. My conduct cannot properly be called altruistic, because it is in the order of nature impossible for me to cultivate my own tastes without at the same time unintentionally assisting to form the taste of some one else. Nor is it reasonable to say that my end in undertaking grave public responsibilities is self-realisation, because I cannot discharge them without at the same time growing in experience, wisdom, and self-command. To judge of conduct by *mere* results is to make the mistake of importing a purely biological point of view into the psychological sciences, and of forgetting that the emergence of consciously purposive action upon the stage of evolution transforms altogether all the laws and conditions of future progress.[1]

[1] On this point I may quote some excellent remarks from *Outlines of Sociology* by Lester F. Ward, p. 98. "The biological must be clearly marked off from the psychological standpoint. The former is that of *function*, the latter that of *feeling*. . . . The end of Nature is function, *i.e.* life. It is biological. The end of the creature is feeling, *i.e.* it is psychic. From the standpoint of Nature feeling is a means to function. From the standpoint of the organism function is a means to feeling. Pleasure and pain came into existence in order that a certain class of beings might live, but those beings having been given existence, now live in order to enjoy. . . . As Nature cares nothing for their enjoyments, and is indifferent to their sufferings, so they in turn care nothing for her great scheme of evolution, and would not make the smallest personal sacrifice to further it. Yet, from the very manner in which this new element came into the world, this single pursuit of their own good proves to be that which could alone secure the success of Nature's scheme." Perhaps I may be allowed to dissociate myself from the speculative suggestions of this passage

An objection against our account of the moral phenomena, in principle not very different from that which has been considered, might be formulated in the following fashion. How, it might be asked, could society continue to exist if it were really possible for the purposes of the individual and the interests of the community to be constantly in antagonism to one another? Does not the very fact of the continued existence of societies prove that self-realisation and social service are really only two different aspects of the same thing? The answer to this difficulty is implicitly contained in all that we have on more than one occasion said about the significance for the species or the community of both self-preservative and parental or social instincts. It is clear, of course, that the human or any other species would rapidly die out were there not, on the whole, a correspondence between the acts which yield satisfaction to individuals and those which are necessary for the protection and perpetuation of their kind. In the terminology of Mr. Lester Ward, feeling and function must on the whole correspond if a species is to contend successfully for its existence against competitors and against unfavourable changes in the general environment.

There is, however, plenty of room within this general correspondence for numerous individual instances of disharmony. The continuance of the species will not be jeopardised by individual cases of acts which give satisfaction to the individual at the cost of the interest of the species, provided that these cases are compensated for by other cases in which the individual is sacrificed to the species. The gains and losses must in fact balance one another on the whole account. Again, looking not to the natural propagation of the species, but to the continuance of the various more or less artificial forms of association beyond the bounds of family and clan, it is of course clear that such associations can only continue unchanged so long as their individual members on the whole find their personal satisfaction in the services they render to the whole

as to the way in which pleasure and pain "came into being." I cannot even affirm that pleasure and pain ever "came into being" at all. That is a point on which, as it seems to me, we know nothing. But the expressions quoted excellently describe the contrast between evolution as it appears, when considered in abstraction from individual purposive action, and the psychologist's world of purposive behaviour.

society. But here again the correspondence does not need to be absolute and exact. An association of men, whether in the form of a state, a church, or a private society, will continue to subsist so long as any deviations from the strict correspondence of individual satisfaction with social function in the direction of gratifying self at the expense of the associated body are compensated by similar deviations in the opposite direction.

Every one of us, I suppose, yields at one time or another to the temptation to make his private market out of some social organisation to which he happens to belong. But then each of us, at some other time, has to sacrifice his merely personal interests to the preservation of the various associated bodies of which he is a member. Or, if there are a certain number of men who get more out of society in the form of opportunities of self-culture than they ever pay back in the shape of social performance, there are others who bestow more than they get, and thus on the whole the balance is redressed. The "working classes" on the whole pay back to society more than they ever get from it, the successful capitalist probably and the unemployed rich certainly receive much more than they pay. It is exactly like the workings of a good system of taxation; if you are overtaxed in one direction you are probably under-taxed somewhere else, or, at any rate, if you are altogether overtaxed some one else is under-taxed, and so on the whole the amount received by the central Treasury is proportionate to the income of the tax-payers. The moment this general balance is disturbed, the moment the vast majority of the members of an artificial society are habitually called upon to sacrifice permanently for the sake of the society more than they ever get back out of it, social dissolution begins to set in. For instances of the process one has only to consider any small or great dissolution of society one pleases, from the termination of a partnership to the disintegration of an empire or the collapse of a civilisation.

In all the immense variety of cases of social transformation or revolution the formula remains the same. Approximate correspondence of social performance with advantages accruing to the individual from society means stability of social

institutions; disproportion of performance and advantage accruing means transformation of institutions, or, where the disproportion is extreme, revolution. The reason why the various forms of artificial social combination are so short-lived in comparison with the duration of the species, is that the correspondences required for the mere continued existence of the human species are of a very simple and rudimentary sort, and are to a very high degree secured by the blind workings of biological evolution, in entire independence of conscious intelligent and purposive selective action. The correspondences, on the contrary, necessary to the stability of any considerable set of social institutions are of a much finer and more complex kind, and depend increasingly in proportion to their increasing complexity upon conscious human purpose. The very fineness of the social machinery renders it easily liable to serious derangement.

As far as one can see, civilisation and conscious devotion to an unselfish ideal are hardly necessary for the mere perpetuation of the human race. The species would apparently have run no serious risk of extinction if intelligence had ceased to develop any further after the first discovery of agriculture. Had human development stopped short with the transition from the nomad to the settled agricultural state, the life of the species would no doubt have been ruder and poorer in sources of lasting satisfaction; but there seems no reason to suppose that it would have been less vigorous than it is to-day. Intellectual and artistic culture would thus seem, judged from the biological standpoint, a mere by-product of evolution, and there is so far a germ of truth in Schopenhauer's well-known theory that the intellect is a secondary offshoot of the primary psychical power he calls "will."[1]

On the other hand, the successful preservation over a long period of time of those complex correspondences upon which the stability of artificial social institutions depends is hardly possible apart from the continuous exercise of all the skill and foresight of a succession of able administrators. If no deliberate provision were made for

[1] I borrow the thought expressed in this sentence, as also the happy reference to Schopenhauer, from M. Ward's *Outlines of Sociology*.

the protection of the present and the rearing of the coming generation of human beings, it seems probable that these results would be satisfactorily secured in the ordinary process of biological evolution ; the withdrawal of the fostering and directing intelligence of administrations, Chambers of Commerce, convocations, and similar bodies, would plunge the various artificial forms of association into complete anarchy.

It is only half the truth to say that forms of social life grow and are not made ; social and intellectual progress, beyond the comparatively rudimentary stage at which man's victory over his rivals in the mere struggle for continued existence is assured, is essentially bound up with the maintenance of institutions which have not grown up spontaneously under the pressure of biological laws, but have been more or less of set purpose devised by the ingenuity of man in order to further more or less clearly anticipated results. The extraordinary interest which, owing in the main to the genius of Darwin, our century has come to take in questions of biology, has unfortunately led to the neglect of this aspect of political truth—an aspect which was thoroughly understood, and clearly, if crudely, expressed by the theorists who adopted the doctrine of the "Social Contract." We may hope that as the application of biological concepts to social phenomena loses the charm of novelty, the limits of its validity will be more clearly perceived and fuller justice than is at present possible done to the solid merits of political philosophers, whose misfortune it was to live before the now reigning fashion in sociology had come up. At present it is almost as impossible, without drawing upon one the charge of paradox-mongering, to be fully just to the speculations of Hobbes as it would be for a dandy of to-day to be fair to the obsolete fashions of the bloods and bucks of the days of our grandfathers.

There is but one more question which seems to call for an answer before we bring the present chapter to an end. Granted, it might be said, that in the civilisation of the present, as of previous ages, there is no complete and final harmony between personal satisfaction and social service, may we not expect that such agreement as there is will be widened and deepened in the further progress of social evolution ?

May it not be reasonable to suppose that the history of human progress hitherto has been the history of the gradual production of a type of being who in the main finds his own individual satisfaction in the performance of those acts which subserve the interests of the species or the community? And if so, why should it be unreasonable to hope that an evolution which has already effected a general coincidence between satisfaction and social duty will one day reach its goal in the creation of a social system under which the egoistic and altruistic tendencies will be so completely harmonised that every member in seeking his own personal satisfaction will be of necessity performing just those actions by which he can most advance the general satisfaction of the rest of the community? All that is required in order to bring about such an ideal social system would indeed seem to be that the "anti-social" type of character should be gradually elbowed out of the world in the course of the struggle for existence, and there can surely be no doubt that this requirement is really effected both by the pressure of the biological conditions of existence and by the conscious exercise by the community of punitive and educational functions. Hence it is not surprising that Plato in the ancient and Mr. Spencer in the modern world should have persuaded themselves that it is within the bounds of possibility that there should some day come into being a social order under which there would no longer be any conflict between individual self-development and the call of public duty. That Plato trusts for the creation of his ideal to the personal agency of a virtuous despot, and Mr. Spencer to the spontaneous course of an unconscious social evolution, is a minor divergence of detail, only important as illustrating the characteristic difference between the highest ancient and the latest modern concepts of the general structure of the universe. Where the ancient world saw quasi-human purposive activity, the modern prefers to recognise rather the unconscious selection of the fittest types for survival effected by the steady operation of a practically constant environment upon a material more susceptible to change.

We have already given our reason for holding that human development needs for its complete interpretation the ancient principle of conscious teleology as well as the modern principle

of unconscious evolution. We proceed now to indicate the grounds upon which we find ourselves compelled to regard the ultimate synthesis of self-realisation with self-sacrifice contemplated by Plato[1] and Mr. Spencer as altogether impossible. Looking first at the simpler and less sophisticated form in which the picture of the imaginary perfect society is put before us by the ancient philosopher, we cannot but be struck by the truth of a criticism advanced by an interlocutor in the *Republic*, and never quite satisfactorily disposed of by Socrates. It is surely perfectly true, as Adeimantus says at the beginning of the fourth book, that Socrates expects the "rulers" of his ideal city to sacrifice their own happiness to the general well-being of the community. All the brilliant argumentation of the ninth book only succeeds in showing that the self-devoting ruler of the philosophic state will, on the whole, be happier than any type of man to be found in our present imperfect societies; it is nowhere shown that he might not enjoy an even greater need of private and personal satisfaction, if he were sometimes to prefer the gratification of his individual tastes to the service of the community.

And there is thus in Plato's *Republic* no final reconciliation of the competing claims of self-culture and social justice. It is clear, for instance, from the whole tenor of the dialogue, that philosopher statesmen educated on the Platonic system would feel the summons to quit, during the very best years of their life, their intellectual pursuits for the arduous and thankless task of administration as a very real privation, and there is no attempt to prove that the privation would be made up to the statesman by any subsequent personal satisfaction. In fact, one may say, the more highly cultivated the mind of the philosophic ruler the more real would be the sacrifice involved in his acceptance of power. Such sacrifices of personal inclination and taste would indeed be more readily made by the philosophic ruler than by the average politician of a lower type, but they would also be more keenly felt for what they are.

In fact one may say that in one sense the conflict between the claims of self and the claims of the public is

[1] But it must be remembered that Plato contemplated the periodic dissolution of this ideal society.

more intense in the highest than in the lowest forms of society and civilisation. It is true that in the more perfect society the path of self-culture will, in the majority of cases, coincide more closely with the path of social duty than in a less civilised community. Indeed we can hardly conceive any other standard by which to measure the relative worth of different social systems than that of the degree to which social institutions make it possible for the individuals who live under them, while contributing by their action to the security and permanence of the social organisation as a whole, to realise for themselves full individual satisfaction. But, at the same time, it must not be forgotten that the very advance in civilisation and intelligence which makes the approximate realisation of this ideal possible, also multiplies the ways in which personal satisfaction may be on occasion sought at the expense of the community as a whole, and consequently increases the sacrifices which may from time to time be demanded by circumstances. The ideal philosophic ruler would be less often tempted to gratify his personal inclinations by the sacrifice of his country's interests than the average party politician of to-day, but the temptations when they did occur would probably be more intense, and, if yielded to, productive of more wide-spread social mischief. If the growth of intelligence does much to make men less selfish, it also does much to intensify their selfishness, on its occasions of prevalence, and to exaggerate its effects.

Consider, for instance, the effect of growth in intelligence upon the not unfrequent conflict between love and duty. The possibility of such a conflict seems involved in the very existence of the emotions connected with the sexual appetite, but its intensity will depend very largely upon the extent to which the mere instinctive physical desire has become overlaid with the more refined and elevated feelings awakened by appreciation of the mental and moral qualities of the person desired. The wrath of Achilles bereft of Briseis was, after all, little more than the resentment of a semi-savage, deprived of a chattel which could be replaced after the next sack of a hostile town; hence, evil as its effects were upon the Greeks, they were as nothing in comparison of what they might have been if Briseis had been to Achilles, not a mere handsome

woman or valuable piece of property, but an unique and absolutely unreplaceable object of personal affection. Othello, one thinks, would have done worse than sulk in his tent if he had been robbed of Desdemona in those early days before the shadow of Cassio had fallen upon their happiness.

To express the principle for which I am contending in its simplest form: the satisfactions which the savage or semi-savage is called upon to sacrifice from time to time by the social opinion of his tribe are mostly of a comparatively simple and chiefly physical kind, and can easily be adequately compensated; the satisfactions sacrificed by a man of civilised intelligence are in their nature more dependent upon a vast conjunction of conditions, and are frequently so unique as to admit of no replacement. Hence, though with the advance of civilisation and the improvement of social institutions, the occasions upon which they are demanded, may become rarer, the sacrifices become at the same time more imperative and harder to make. The more highly complex and developed the type of society, the more on the whole its members are enabled to enrich their own lives with permanent satisfactions, but the more also are they required on occasion to forego. It seems impossible, therefore, to accept the view that progress in civilisation could ever affect the abolition of the conflict between self-satisfaction and social duty.[1] Self-sacrifice without compensation, we maintain, must remain an ineliminable feature of any form of life attainable by beings who, like ourselves, are members of a species perpetuated by sexual propagation, and of communities formed by the more or less artificial association of biologically and psychologically distinct individuals.

And if the ideal of Plato and Mr. Spencer seems an impossible one, even more impossible does it appear even to approximate to it by mere surrender of ourselves to the unassisted working of biological evolution. Even a remotely approximate realisation of a social system under which the interests of each would coincide with those of all seems unattainable under a *régime* of *laisser aller*. For what after all is the end, as we may by a convenient personification term it, of Nature in the process of evolution? Simply the

[1] See further chap. vii.

production of a type of organism, so well adapted to its environment as to be able to reproduce itself in perpetuity so long as the character of the environment remains relatively stable. When this end has been reached there seems to be nothing further left for Nature to achieve.

Or, dropping the metaphor, when the environment has so transformed the organism as to leave it in a state of stable adjustment to climatic and meteorological conditions, and victorious over its competitors for possession of the means of nourishment, natural selection may be said to have done its work. Further modifications must henceforth take the form of transformation of the environment by the animal, or, in other words, must bear the character of conscious purposive action. As already remarked, the process of modification of organism by environment seems to have reached its maximum in the human species not later than the transition from the nomad to the agricultural state. With the discovery of the means of producing fire, and the later discovery of the method of raising crops, man may be said to have finally attained a position which rendered him (assuming that topographical conditions were not singularly unfavourable) secure against his animal competitors for the means of subsistence, and, on the whole, independent of the minor variations in climatic and meteorological conditions. In other words, these discoveries placed him in a position not much less favourable than that which our civilised society now enjoys for permanently perpetuating his kind; with these discoveries the battle of the "struggle for life" against other organic types may be said to have been finally won.

If, then, no other conditions than those of general biological evolution were operative in shaping the course of human development, there seems no reason why the evolution of society should ever have advanced beyond the primitive agricultural stage; and, on the same ground, it appears probable that a long continued period of complete *laisser aller, i.e.* of complete abdication of direct and conscious control of social development, should culminate in reversion to that type. If human development has not ceased with the attainment of the primitive agricultural stage, the reason is that, before that condition was reached, man had

already become a creature possessed of conscious purposive intelligence, and consequently able of his own motion to transform his environment into increasing conformity with his awakening moral and æsthetic ideals. I have no quarrel with the doctrine that purposive intelligence itself was originally produced in the ordinary course of biological evolution, simply as giving the being possessed of it important advantages over rivals in the competition for the means of subsistence, but I would at the same time insist as strongly as possible upon the truth—amply recognised by Mr. L. F. Ward, but too much overlooked by the ordinary evolutionary sociologists—that purposive intelligence, once called into existence, promptly becomes the master of the forces to which it owes its own creation. Schopenhauer's great idea of the domination of "will" by intellect is no mere far-away ideal; it is simply the description in abstract terms of the process to which all social progress, beyond that essential to the mere continued existence of the human race, is due. As Mr. Ward excellently observes, the rudest attempts of primitive man at tool-making and at artistic decoration spring from a conscious effort to transform his environment into harmony with intelligent ideals of which no animal, so far as we know, is capable. *Laisser aller* is Nature's method in biological evolution, but the whole course of human progress beyond the primitive agricultural stage at least has resulted from the supersession of that method by conscious and deliberate control of social conditions.

To revert to our old metaphor, so long as there is not enough divergence between individual enjoyment and social function as to imperil the continued existence of the species, it is nothing to Nature, though everything to the individual, how great the divergence may be. Every step in the further reduction of the disagreement has been effected in the main by human activity consciously directed to the modification of social institutions. It cannot too often be repeated that even the most rudimentary forms of social organisation are not mere natural products, and that the highest types of society are almost entirely artificial. The parallel between human societies and the natural group, the herd or pack of gregarious animals, is at almost every point as fallacious as it is popular.

Even the least civilised human social groups, such as the tribes of aboriginal Australians, among whom, if anywhere, the social bond should approximate almost nearly to the merely natural, show in their elaborate systems of exogamy a degree of artificial control of social conditions to which there is probably no parallel in the animal world.[1]

It is only by resolutely ignoring all the characteristic marks by which development within the human species is distinguished from development outside it that evolutionary science can be made to yield arguments in favour of the abdication by society of direct control over the course of its own progressive modification. To return to the pre-human method of *laisser aller* would be to turn our backs upon the method by which every considerable advance has ever been made towards the realisation of our artistic scientific and moral ideals. Not less direct control of social conditions, but control more intelligently exercised, seems to be what we really need. Plato's proposal to bring about the social millennium by the combined forces of legislation and education, crude as we sometimes think it, shows after all a much sounder appreciation of the conditions of human improvement than is evinced by modern biological sociologists, who are for leaving the mere struggle for subsistence to work itself out unaided and unguided by statesmanlike intelligence.[2]

In a later chapter we shall see how important is the bearing of these apparently very general considerations upon problems of morality. Let us, in conclusion, bring together the results of the discussions of the last few pages. We have seen that the existence of an interminable conflict between two different types of moral action has its foundation in the most rudimentary peculiarities of our constitution and our position in the world of organic types; that this conflict, so far from

[1] Mr. W.E. Roth, in his monograph on the aborigines of North-West Central Queensland, has well shown how these rules of exogamy work in preventing a general failure of the food-supply. As a man, his wife, and his children, under these rules, all feed on different kinds of food, the danger of a universal scarcity is largely obviated. It is, I suppose, another question whether Mr. Roth is right in assuming that the rule of exogamy were deliberately invented to meet this difficulty.

[2] Though I have already mentioned the name of Mr. Lester F. Ward more then once in the course of the present section, the debt I owe, for much of what is here urged as to the peculiarities of social evolution, seems to call for a separate and formal acknowledgment. May I also be allowed to express the pleasure I have felt from Mr. Ward's recognition of the real philosophical worth of the sometimes underrated work of Schopenhauer?

disappearing in the course of social evolution, has been at once partly obviated and partly intensified by every advance in civilisation and in intelligence; that there is every reason to believe that its appearances, if rarer, would be more intense under social institutions more perfect than our own. Lastly, that all social progress must depend in the main not upon the unassisted operation of the general conditions of organic evolution, but upon the conscious and deliberate control of those conditions by human purposive activity.

How do these conclusions affect our answers to the questions about the position of ethics among the sciences, which it is the main object of our Essay to discuss? Clearly they tend to prove that ethics is no body of systematic and coherent deductions from a single metaphysical principle, but a mass of empirical generalisations from psychological facts, which can only be adequately described by the use of hypotheses which are ultimately irreconcilable with one another, and therefore only provisional. There is no one self-consistent highest category under which all the various phenomena of the moral life can be satisfactorily grouped. As in the various theories by which we attempt to describe physical phenomena we find ourselves driven to assert now the complete inertia, now the spontaneous mobility of material elements, now the complete homogeneousness of an all-pervading "ether," and again the presence in it of an infinite number of differential motions, now the instantaneous action of gravitation, and again the dependence of all action upon a succession of impacts,—so in our descriptive analysis of the phenomena of the moral life we are compelled to regard now self-assertion, self-satisfaction, self-development, and again the satisfactions of a wider whole, as the two equally ultimate but quite irreconcilable poles between which our ethical practice is perpetually oscillating. In the case of ethics, as in the case of physics, the incoherence of our most ultimate hypotheses is of itself sufficient proof that none of them describe the facts upon which they are based in the form which they would present to a "complete" or "pure" experience of the type spoken of in our introductory chapter. At the same time *we* are quite without the means of saying what amount of transformation our hypotheses would have to undergo in order to bring them

into harmony with the formal characteristics of such a pure experience.

We claim, therefore, that a serious examination of the characters of the various types of virtue actually recognised among men is bound to show that there is no one common ultimate hypothesis which adequately describes them all, and that ethics must therefore, like physics, be regarded as a merely empirical and provisional science not based upon any metaphysical insight into ultimate truth. At the same time our discussion of the characteristic differences between human and extra-human evolution has helped to make it clear that ethics is not, what some thinkers have attempted to make it, a branch of applied biology, but an independent science founded directly on psychology, and most closely allied to the other psychological sciences, sociology, economics, and—on its psychological side—anthropology. In the next chapter we shall try to enforce these conclusions still more irresistibly by an examination of the general characteristics of the ultimate ethical ideals of civilisation and of the general features of specifically moral progress.

CHAPTER V

MORAL IDEALS AND MORAL PROGRESS

"Der Mensch will Eintracht; aber die Natur weiss besser was für seine Gattung gut ist; sie will Zwietracht."—KANT.

THE discussions of our last chapter have to a considerable extent anticipated the solution of the problems which we now go on to consider. In the present chapter we propose to examine, first of all, the ultimate ethical ideals of modern civilisation, and next, the process by which an approximation is being made to their realisation, with the object of discovering how far it is possible to construct an account of moral ideals and of moral progress on a basis of purely empirical psychology, and how far the account thus obtained exhibits the general characteristics of "pure" experience. Unless we are fundamentally mistaken, the result of our investigation will be to convince us that the practical moral ideals of our civilisation are, from the metaphysical point of view, self-contradictory, but that any attempt to make them metaphysically self-consistent would end in rendering them quite impracticable. We shall also see that no satisfactory metaphysical account can be given of the process of moral progress.

We begin, then, with some general considerations upon the nature of the ultimate moral ideal. Plato had long ago, in one of his later and profounder dialogues, grasped the fact that no single category will adequately express the nature of our highest ideals of good. We cannot, he says in a passage (*Philebus*, 65A) which seems to contain an advance in ethical insight upon some of the doctrines of the *Republic*, "hunt down" the "good" by the aid of a single concept, and are therefore driven to consider it under the three separate forms

of beauty, proportion, and truth. How far these three forms of "good" are capable of being combined in any single concrete instance of goodness Plato does not attempt to decide. It is just this question, which he saw fit to leave unanswered, that we have to consider in the following pages. We have seen already that morality tends to develop along two diverging lines—the line which leads towards fulness and completeness of individual satisfaction, and that which leads to widely diffused social justice or beneficence. It might seem, therefore, that we should be justified in asserting on the strength of our last chapter, without any further investigation of the point, that there are two sides to moral action so irreconcilable with each other that any practicable moral ideal must be of the nature of a compromise between them. The further considerations which we now proceed to produce will, we hope, place this conclusion beyond all reasonable doubt.

The first question we have to raise is, whether there are any marks which are universally characteristic of and inseparable from the Ultimate Moral Ideal as such. The probability that there may be, strictly speaking, more than one moral ideal does not affect our right to put this question. Even if it proves impossible to combine in one coherent concept the ideals of self-realisation and universal justice, there may still be certain formal characteristics common to them both, and it is precisely these formal characteristics of which we are at present in search. One such formal characteristic we clearly have in a quality which is inherent in the very nature of every true ideal, the quality of thoroughness, or consistency, or, as we may also call it, in the case of morality, purity of purpose or single-mindedness. This quality is not, of course, peculiar to the ethical ideal. Any intelligible ideal, of what general nature soever, must be self-consistent, and the process by which it is realised thorough. An ideal that is radically self-contradictory is no ideal; a process that is vacillating and infirm is no process of realisation of an ideal. In every department of thought and action it is the insincere man, the hypocrite, who tries to face in two directions at once, who is most removed from and most detested by those whose gaze is steadily fixed on a single high ideal. Thoroughness and purity of purpose are in the world of everyday moral conduct what

directness, clearness, and vigour of thought are to the student, or sincerity of vision and firmness of hand to the artist. In science, art, and ordinary moral action alike, the one sin which from its own nature has never forgiveness is the sin of conscious or unconscious duplicity.

Consistency or singleness, then, must be characteristic of the moral, as of all other ideals, just in so far as there is a recognisable moral ideal. In this sense we may say that the formal characteristic of all great moral achievement or lofty purpose is truthfulness, sincerity, or strength. But it is manifest from the results of our last chapter that such sincerity may attach to more than one line of moral endeavour. A man may, for instance, exhibit his sincerity of moral purpose in the form of a consistent and unremitting pursuit of full and rich personal self-culture, or again, in uncompromising self-sacrifice for a cause which he believes to be that of his country, his fellow-men, or his God. And yet again, a man may, strange as it sounds, follow with sincerity and singleness of purpose some form of compromise between self-culture and self-devotion such as is represented by the ordinary moral code of civilised persons. It is not *mere* compromise that of itself fully destroys the singleness of the ideal and the sincerity of the endeavour after it, but vacillating and uncertain compromise upon ever-fluctuating conditions. In all these three forms of moral endeavour, then, one may find some degree of that singleness of purpose and consistency of aim which arises from devotion to a more or less self-consistent ideal. We have still, however, to ask whether any one of the types of ideal just described can be pursued without some departure from singleness of purpose; in other words, whether compromise, and compromise upon no fixed and certain terms, be not an inseparable characteristic of the most self-consistent moral activity. In more paradoxical phrase, we have to ask whether there is not a hidden root of insincerity and hypocrisy beneath all morality; whether, after all, that service of two masters, to which, as we have seen, the moral man is bound, can be completely satisfactory in its final results.

Our method of examining this question will be as follows. We shall consider, first, one-sided devotion to an ideal of self-culture or of social service, and shall ask how far such devotion

succeeds in realising its own object, and shall then raise the same question about the mixed ideal, which is customarily followed by men of no marked practical originality. Thus we have to ask—(1) Does thorough-going devotion to an ideal of self-culture really culminate in the full and complete satisfaction at which it aims? (2) Does equally thorough-going devotion to the interests of a wider whole really achieve the results it proposes? (3) and, lastly, Does the attempt to compromise between the two types of ideal succeed in satisfactorily realising both?

Our conviction is that the result will prove that every one of these questions must be answered in the negative. You may choose which alternative you will; you may decide to sacrifice everything else to the full unfettered satisfaction of your own physical and mental wants; you may decide to sacrifice yourself and your own capacities of enjoyment altogether for the sake of some more or less public end; you may attempt to combine in a single plan of life both forms of endeavour: in none of these cases will you ever get by consistent adhesion to your principle of conduct what you expected of it. All moral endeavour, we shall find, is bound to be a business of more or less unprincipled compromise, and all the results which issue from it are marked more or less by "vanity and vexation of spirit." We will now consider more in detail the three cases we have distinguished from each other, beginning with the morality of strenuous and single-minded devotion to personal self-culture.

It must be admitted that there is at first sight something fascinating about the ideal of a life devoted upon principle to the steady pursuit at all hazards of a clearly conceived self-culture. To the logical type of mind, which is readily disgusted with the shilly-shallying and half-hearted compromise between conflicting purposes which make up the conventional moral life of the ordinary virtuous man, an ethical ideal which is recommended by apparent singleness and simplicity, and calls upon us to follow it "wheresoever it leads," is specially attractive. We may perhaps, in order to present in its most cogent form a doctrine which does not altogether satisfy us, argue in the following fashion for uncompromising loyalty to this principle of self-cultivation. What, after all, is it that makes us approve one type of life and condemn another?

Why do we judge one course of action to be worthy and another unworthy? Surely because the one form of life gives us what we really want, and the other does not. What we want is a state of permanent content, of progressive and lasting satisfaction for all our cravings, or, if that is impossible, at least for those which are most insistent and least to be stilled by a change in our external circumstances. We approve the forms of life that can give us this full satisfaction, we disapprove those which promise it and then prove deceptive.

Everywhere where terms of moral praise and censure are applied to actions and habits it will be found that they are distributed in accordance with this general principle. The life which is felt by the poet to be "good" for him is the life in which his creative impulses will have that unhampered field for their discharge, without which they will prove so many sources of discontent and uneasy feeling; the "good" life for the philosopher, again, is no other than that in which he can most completely obtain the progressive satisfaction of those intellectual doubts, which, so long as they remain unanswered, are sources of mental unrest and torment. And so on in every other case, even in the case of the busybody and the philanthropist, who are uncomfortable whenever they are not undertaking the management of some one else's affairs. Their taste may no doubt be an unusual one, and but for the proverb which forbids disputations about matters of individual taste, we might be inclined to call it perverse, but still it is their taste, and it is simply as giving them what they want that the life of disinterested public activity wins their moral approbation.

Universally, then, the first law of moral action is, Know what you really want, and the second, like unto it, is, See that you are not misled into accepting a spurious substitute. So long as you observe these two laws you may expect happiness and self-content; the moment you break them, whether through not knowing what you want, or through allowing yourself to be imposed on by a cheap imitation, you condemn yourself to moral failure and abiding dissatisfaction. Most thoughtful men's lives are in the end unsatisfactory to themselves simply because they either cannot make up their minds what it is they supremely want, or because, knowing what it

is, they are afraid to pursue it at the expense of incurring the censure of their less intelligent and less sincere fellows. To the densely stupid majority, whose life is one everlasting unintelligent compromise between inconsistent purposes, a man who really knows what he cares for, and is prepared to follow it through thick and thin, will frequently seem either a fool or a criminal, and you must be ready, on occasion, to submit to the consequences of being thought a criminal or a fool if you really mean to get out of life just what you supremely want and nothing else. And yet what of all this? Surely anything that is worth having at all is worth the enduring of some difficulty and hardship in the pursuit, and it is monstrous to assert that morality requires that you should follow your principles only so long as you can do so without forfeiting the popular applause. The moral man will surely not adopt, with a difference, the sentiments of Mr. By-ends.[1]

Follow your principle, then, in good and in evil report alike. It may lead you into unpopularity, even into the punishment of the felon or the contempt commonly flung on the enthusiast, but it and it alone will ultimately satisfy you. Sell the whole world, if necessary, and buy with it whatever is for you the "pearl of great price." For in the end nothing can give content but to have known what is your supreme desire and to have gratified it; and nothing can give final and lasting self-dissatisfaction except the following of that which is not what you wanted. There seems no justifiable reason, when once this line of thought is adopted, to stop short of its logical consequences because they may sound shocking to persons of confused ideas. Your tastes may appear to others perverted or criminal; very well, they are not called upon to adopt your mode of living. So long as the "perverted" taste yields you what you find satisfactory no one has a right to censure it merely because it would not give him what he wants. Your objects may be what are popularly called, by

[1] *Pilgrim's Progress*, pt. 1.—"*Save-all.* I pray, what and how many were the things wherein you differed? *By-ends.* Why, they, after their headstrong manner, conclude that it is their duty to rush on their journey all weathers; and I am for waiting for wind and tide. . . . They are for holding their notions though all other men are against them; but I am for religion in what and so far as the times and my safety will bear it. They are for religion when in rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his golden slippers, in the sunshine and with applause."

For "religion" read "my principles," and the passage will fairly express the judgment which an intelligent egoist might pass on our ordinary moral compromises.

persons of other cravings than yours, "immoral,"—that is only because your critics find their own market elsewhere; for you *any* taste is moral so long as, by consistently following it, you get the lasting satisfaction and peace of mind you could not get elsewhere.

The only real moral failure is insincerity or vacillation in acting up to your principle. Even if your taste be "sinful," yet act upon the maxim, *pecca fortiter*, and your life will be, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, a moral success. You may even, if physical dissipation is what contents you more than anything else, adopt in all seriousness the sarcastic advice of Goethe's Valentine, "Du bist doch nun einmal eine Hur,' So sei's auch eben recht." For "any emotion, if thorough enough, would take one to heaven."[1] Only before you embark on the profession of a harlot, it is your duty to find out all you can about the life to which you are committing yourself, and to make sure that a career of prostitution ending in a Lock Hospital will really give you what you want (cf. Nettleship, *Works*, i. 95, 96). If you decide that it will, and the price is worth paying, you are morally on the same level as the missionary who chooses to end a career of self-devotion by dying alone and untended in a leper-settlement; that the world in general does not recognise the resemblance is only another proof of the world's ample stupidity.[2]

[1] So Blake even goes the length of saying, "If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise," and, with the same insistence on *thoroughness* as the one saving virtue, "the tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." And again, "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires" (Proverbs of Hell). The reader who is not familiar with Blake's phraseology may need reminding that according to him all true poets are of "the devil's party."

[2] Compare also the sentiment of such lines as these—

> "Have faith and crave and suffer, and all ye
> The many mansions of my house shall see
> In all content; cast shame and pride away,
> Let honour gild the world's eventless day,
> Shrink not from change, and shudder not at crime,
> Leave lies to rattle in the sieve of time!
> Then whatsoe'er your workday garments stain,
> Of me a wedding-garment shall ye gain
> No God shall dare cry out at, when at last
> Your time of ignorance is overpast."
>
> W. MORRIS. *Love is Enough.*

Or—

> "Can alien Pharisees Thy kindness tell
> Like us, Thy intimates, who nigh Thee dwell?
> Thou say'st, 'All sinners will I burn with fire.'
> Say that to strangers, we know Thee too well."
>
> *Omar Khayyám* (tr. WHINFIELD).

Yet, it might be argued, the moral consequences of this doctrine are, when properly understood, less generally shocking than they sound. After all, even though no moral law be admitted except that of knowing what will satisfy you and taking care to get it, it remains true that some things are in the nature of the case more satisfactory to human beings than to others. There are some objects of which it is practically certain that none but a few abnormal persons will find them by themselves capable of yielding lasting and complete content. There are some careers which can hardly be pursued to a satisfactory issue without the practice of duplicity. For instance, under our present social regulations it would be absolutely necessary for a man to dissemble certain vices in order to reap from the indulgence of them enjoyment at all adequate to the risks of punishment or of social ostracism they involve.[1] Hence it might be plausibly maintained that there would after all be few persons so abnormally constituted as to derive their completest satisfaction from a career of baseness or wickedness. Wickedness, it might be urged, is in its own nature a thing which you cannot pursue unless you are prepared to play the hypocrite and live a double life. It is precisely because wickedness in general is so impossible without hypocrisy that the rare instances of avowed and successful villainy impress the popular imagination so powerfully.

And even the cases of lifelong unconcealed but successful villainy have rarely been instances of real satisfaction. When one talks of Napoleon, for example, as an instance of open and victorious wickedness, one tends to forget about those half dozen years at St. Helena. On the whole, except in very abnormal circumstances, you *cannot* be permanently consistent in wickedness; you must play the hypocrite before mankind, you must make up your mind to endure the dissatisfaction inseparable from the knowledge that you are leading a double life, half of which is organised in diametrical opposition to your own convictions as to what is worth living for if you are not to fail at the very outset of your career. It is of the essence of the devil's situation that he should constantly be

[1] And lifelong consistency in a purely self-centred career is largely rendered impossible to persons of an ordinary degree of natural affection by the simple consideration that to get to the full their own "heart's desire," they would have to break some other heart.

"doing good that evil may come," and, from the point of view of the devil, the necessity must be an exceedingly unpleasant one. So Spinoza tells us that if there were a perfectly wicked being, such as the "devil" of tradition, he would also be the weakest of all creatures.[1] Thus the very conditions of human existence make it impossible for an ordinary man to persist with unremitting consistency and thoroughness in seeking an end that is wicked, *i.e.* that is completely inconsistent with the conditions of the existence of human society, or is, as it is sometimes phrased, thoroughly anti-social or nihilistic.

It does not even seem possible for a normally constituted man to be really thorough-going in the service of one of the lower appetites. For, to begin with, as Plato has so properly insisted, the lower physical appetites are a disorderly crew; the man whose chief desire in life is animal gratification will find himself beset by rival passions, each claiming its share of satisfaction, and will probably find, as most people do who try to satisfy a multitude of claimants, that in seeking to please all he has ended by pleasing none. The "tyrannical" type of character which is so wedded to a single base "ruling passion" as to live consistently for that one lust, and that alone, may be common enough in the poetry of Pope, but is exceedingly rare in actual life.

Further, there are few men who are without some degree of desire for satisfactions of a more intellectual kind than these provided by "Wein, Weib und Gesang"; there are, therefore, few who could consistently starve their intellectual and æsthetic tastes in order to gratify to the full the lusts of the flesh. And, yet again, as we have so often said before, the lusts of the flesh are in their very nature incapable of progressive and abiding satisfaction. At best they break out again after every act of indulgence as violently as before, and at worst they "grow by what they feed on" until the life of their victim becomes an alternation between periods of increasingly furious unsatisfied craving and short spells of momentary gratification. So that they almost invariably, when their satisfaction is made the main object of life, culminate in satiety, or in positive disgust and remorse. In either case it is clear that they can scarcely be said to repay the consistent

[1] *Korte Verhandeling*, ii. 25. Van de Duyvelen.

devotion of a lifetime. How sweet soever they may seem in the hey-day of youth, when the "evil days" come you find that this was after all not what you wanted. You may to the best of your power have kept the first of the two laws of loyalty to self; you have certainly, in letting yourself be fobbed off with such palpable cheats, broken the second.

Thus it is abundantly manifest that the doctrine which teaches that morality consists simply in knowing your own mind and standing by it does not grant a universal license to commit crimes or to give one's self up to filthy lusts. For, as we have seen, doubleness of purpose and disloyalty to principle is inseparable, for the normal man, from a career of mere crime or dissipation. It is only so long as you are pursuing objects which are not inconsistent with the general conditions of stable social existence, and afford progressive satisfaction to intellectual and æsthetic needs which expand as they are satisfied, that you can succeed in being really thorough-going in your loyalty to your principles.[1]

As to those few abnormal beings, however, who *are* satisfied with the life of crime or vice even when it has brought all the customary consequences upon them, the case would stand rather differently. If a man really preferred a life of consistent crime ending with the gallows, or a life of vice ending in delirium tremens, to any other, and was prepared to take all the consequences of his choice without repentance, we should have to say to him, "You certainly seem to know what it is you want, and so long as you honestly set yourself to get it, and don't change your mind when you find out where your choice is taking you, we cannot refuse on our principles to pronounce you a highly moral—in fact, an exemplary, person. But at the same time we also know what we want, and are no less determined than you to stick at nothing in order to get it. Consequently, as we are the majority and you an exceptional and abnormal being, the moment your proceedings seriously interfere with our success in getting what we want, we shall make no scruple about imprisoning you or hanging you, though we shall not cease to regard you with respect as a

[1] Though, of course, there is plenty of scope, even within these limits, for that spirit of rebellion against conventional moral compromise which seems inseparable from any marked degree of practical genius.

morally exemplary character." It would be perfectly illogical to argue from the premises of the theory we are now expounding, as is done sometimes by its friends, sometimes by its foes, that it is a piece of moral iniquity to restrain by imprisonment, or even by torture and death, the man who is so abnormally constituted as to find his highest satisfaction in a life of theft or rape or murder. All that could be reasonably demanded of us would be that while we were flogging or hanging the ravisher or murderer we should not refuse to avow our admiration for his high principles or blameless life. Such a state of mind would not in itself be demonstrably absurd. Without arguing out the relative morality of the criminal and ourselves we may with perfect logic content ourselves with forcing him to give way to us by the threat, so congenial to the temper of Carlyle:[1] "Wretched mortal, give up that, or by the Eternal, thy Maker and mine, I will kill thee!"

From the foregoing sketch, then, it is clear that it would be possible to construct an ethical theory based upon the principle that consistency in seeking one's own truest satisfaction is the measure of moral worth without doing any very serious violence to the actual facts of the moral life. On the whole, we may admit, it would come in the end to much the same thing whether every one set himself to aim consistently and thoroughly at that in which he found lasting and unconditional satisfaction, or to perform for the sake of his fellowmen such social services as he could best render. In either case for the normal man the upshot would be that he set himself manfully to discharge the duties imposed upon him by his "station." But we are dealing here with the merits of a theoretical principle, not with those of a faulty but convenient practical assumption, and, regarded as a theory, the doctrine which we have attempted to expound as plausibly as we could fails to describe the facts of the moral life accurately in more ways than one.

It is, to begin with, clearly vulnerable in its treatment of the case of the abnormal man, the born criminal or drunkard. That you have no right to regard the life of the man who

[1] *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 252 (of edition in five volumes). But we may see reason before we have done to regard this appeal to the "Sword of Mahomet" with Bacon (Essay of *Unity in Religion*) as a mere "dashing of the second table (*i.e.* of the law) against the first."

drinks himself to death and enjoys the process as less morally worthy than that of the man who gets his enjoyment out of the pursuit of fine art or science or enlightened benevolence, is clearly a necessary corollary from the principles upon which our theory is based, but is at the same time felt as outrageous by the moral conscience of men of high principle who are not biassed by an *a priori* ethical doctrine. If your theory, it might reasonably be said, professes to be an entirely new morality, such paradoxes may have their proper place in it, but as an explanation of the existing distribution of moral predicates it is simply absurd. Every one not under the influence of a theory for which he is prepared to swear that black is white must be aware that he does habitually assume that the drunkard's life, however sincerely pursued and enjoyed, is a life of a low moral type. *Quidquid vult valde vult* is no doubt a high recommendation of a man's character, but in the judgment of conscientious unspeculative men it is not the first and last word of ethical criticism. You may both know what you want and see that you get it, and yet be condemned as morally bad; it is not enough to want something very much and be unremitting in your quest after it: you must also, if you are to win moral approbation, want the things that good men want. To construct an ethical theory based upon the downright denial of these facts is as thoroughly unscientific as it would be to construct a physical system based on the assumption that gravitation does not operate instantaneously. If the moralist is more prone to hypotheses which outrage the facts than the physicist, that is only because it is easier for the former to persuade himself that it is business to invent a brand new system of approbations and disapprobations than for the latter to conceive himself called upon to create a new heaven and a new earth.[1]

It may fairly be urged that the paradoxical view which the theory we are now considering compels us to take of the abnormal characters which are for a system of ethics the exceptions which "prove the rule," is in itself sufficient demonstration of the falsity of the theory. The considerations

[1] Of course it *is* one part of the moralist's office to remodel our judgments of praise and blame, and so to create "new tables of the law," but this constructive task can only be satisfactorily carried out on a basis of intelligent insight into the principles regulating the existing distribution of moral predicates.

already advanced in the last few sentences seem of themselves to prove that mere consistency in the pursuit of that which satisfies you is only a formal characteristic, not the one and only material characteristic of a satisfactory moral ideal. It is true, then, as we have seen, the *good* life—using the word to denote the kind of life which would be called good by the average intelligent and unprejudiced person—is more consistent than the bad life in almost every case; but the qualifying phrase we have had to add is enough to show that "consistency" is not by itself an adequate description of the qualities by which the good life is distinguished from the bad.

This is, however, by no means all that we have to say against the theory which at first seemed so plausible. The considerations just mentioned have damaged that theory seriously already, but much worse remains behind. We are now to see that unremitting and thorough-going self-satisfaction is an impossible thing—a thing not to be had by the normally constituted man on any terms. We are to see that this exclusive devotion to a single ideal, apart from which no man ever did or ever will achieve anything considerable, is inseparably bound up with defeat and disappointment. That no one really knows so well what he wants and is so single-minded in his quest after it as not, in the end, to find that he has not altogether got what he expected—in a word, that dissatisfaction more or less intense is the final outcome of our most strenuous and enlightened endeavour after satisfaction.

I would invite the reader to ponder on the considerations we are now about to advance, and to supplement them by his own private reflections on life and the world all the more because, owing mainly to the influence of Carlyle in England and Mommsen in Germany, the cult of the successful adventurer has become in our time quite a popular literary fashion. With the more moderate devotees of the cult we have indeed no serious quarrel; they are, we own, quite right in holding that there must be something of value about the man who succeeds in doing anything, even in swindling. When one reflects upon the proportion of swindlers who come to disgrace one feels that it would be dimly heroic to win campaign after campaign even in a warfare directed against the pockets and bankbooks of the gullible. Few readers of

Mr. Meredith, I imagine, can entirely withhold admiration from the daring and ingenuity of Augustus Fitz-George Richmond Roy. But as against the extravagant opinion that nothing is morally blameworthy except failure we shall do good service if we can show that the most successful of men is, after all, a partial failure. If we can prove this, it will not be very difficult to vindicate still further the moral sentiments of the unsophisticated by showing that it is morally better to fail in some purposes than to succeed in others.

First, then, we remark that it is a mere delusion to suppose that you can ever have successful endeavour in one direction except at the cost of failure somewhere else. It is a fundamental law of human action that nothing is to be had for nothing. If you wish to succeed in any particular purpose or set of allied purposes, you must be prepared to pay for your success by failure somewhere or other. The ideal of an all-round self-culture in which every craving finds its satisfaction, every taste its education, is one of those ideals which exist only on paper. The "ruling passion," as we have already said, is a mere imaginary creation of a false and shallow psychological theory. Our various cravings for satisfaction of various kinds, our various capacities of self-cultivation, form not a harmonious system but a chaotic and mutually repellent aggregate. You cannot gratify all your cravings, you cannot educate your "self" in all directions at once, and whatever element in it you choose to foster at the expense of the rest, you are certain to find sooner or later that in the cultivation of it you have not found full satisfaction and perfect self-development. Not merely the self-discipline by which certain tendencies within the self which conflict with the development along the lines for which you care most are kept in a state of repression, but downright self-mutilation by the refusal to cultivate certain necessary elements of a full and all-round self-development is essential to the successful pursuit of any ideal of self-culture. You must part with much of what you permanently want in order to secure any part of it. You must be willing to enter life maimed and halt if you are to enter it at all. It is this inevitable necessity of learning to accept with resignation mere half-satisfaction that makes the course of life appear to most of us in our moments of bitter

self-examination a series of choices between alternatives of which both are detestable.

Let us, for instance, examine a type of life which would probably be pronounced by most of us as free from disappointment and failure, and as full of lasting and placid satisfaction as any type can be—I mean the life of the student who is entirely absorbed in and devoted to his science. If we find that even the student has to pay for his successes by the loss of sources of satisfaction and elements of self-culture which are indispensable to a permanently contented life of all-round self-realisation, we shall hardly be inclined to deny that the same holds good *a fortiori* of every other aspirant after full individual self-culture.

We have already seen, in our last chapter, that it is almost inevitable that the successful devotee of intellectual pursuits should practise a considerable degree of self-restraint in the matter of yielding to the suggestions of the lower appetites. Such self-discipline as this, however, hardly comes under the head of the self-renunciation of which we are now speaking. For it may be reasonably maintained that the very discipline to which the strenuous student submits his lower appetites renders such occasional gratification of them as he may allow himself by way of relaxation all the more agreeable. So far Plato seems to be in the right when he tells us that the "appetitive element" in the soul obtains the highest happiness possible to it only when held in check by the higher elements of intellect and loyalty to conscience. If such self-discipline were all the price that a scholar had to pay for his intellectual attainments, it might well be urged that the scholarly life is a concrete example of the satisfactory results of knowing just what you want, and getting it at all hazards. But we shall speedily find, if we consider a little more clearly, that the cost of scientific self-culture is infinitely greater than this.

To begin with, consider only the physical cost, under our present social conditions, at any rate, of the steady pursuit of knowledge. Intellectual advance in almost every department is to-day more than ever dependent upon the organised co-operation of numbers of persons animated by the same spirit and pursuing the same ends. It is practically essential to the student—except in those rare cases in which he is from the

first possessed of ample private means—to live in the comparatively close and unhealthy atmosphere of a crowded and smoky town, in order that he may be able to avail himself of the great libraries and laboratories without which his work cannot be done. Further, if he is ever to come within measurable distance of finding answers to the questions that perplex him, he must rise early and go to bed late, and spend long hours of the day and the night in unremitting sedentary labour, often by a physically trying artificial light, in an unhealthy position and a comparatively foul atmosphere. The hours he can afford for outdoor physical exercise are insufficient for efficient bodily culture, even when the habits unconsciously contracted from years of sedentary work have not made him prematurely indifferent to or positively indisposed to the requisite bodily exertions. In a similar way, his physical habits are frequently highly unfavourable to the proper discharge of the functions of digestion.

It is true that some at least of these physical drawbacks to the intellectual life might be removed by more general attention to public hygiene, as well as by conscientious adherence on the part of the scholar himself to the laws of health. But when all deductions for the results of merely accidental conditions have been made, it must still remain true that full physical development and high mental development are, in the vast majority of cases, incompatible with one another. This means that the scholar must either consent so far to be inconsistent in his pursuit of that which, as a scholar, he supremely wants as to put up with less intellectual progress, for the sake of better health and a longer life, or must be attended throughout his career with the discontented and unpleasant emotions inseparable from indigestion, torpid liver, and the other consequences of his sedentary life. Either he must divide his allegiance between two masters, or must reconcile himself to permanent discomfort. In either case his quest for full self-satisfaction and complete self-culture is a partial failure.

The sacrifices just spoken of are, however, the least part of those which have to be made in the consistent pursuit of any form of artistic or intellectual culture. More serious still are the intellectual self-mutilations which the scientific career entails. We too commonly talk as if it were really possible

for the student (the gifted student at any rate) to fulfil Bacon's boast of taking all knowledge for his province. Nothing could be more remote from the real circumstances. It will afford a melancholy comment upon the futility of our attempts at complete intellectual self-culture, if any man who has devoted even a few years to the serious study of any important subject will contrast his present mental condition with that he enjoyed when he first entered upon his scientific career. The necessity of "specialisation" means no less than this, that the "wisdom-loving" nature must consent to give up all prospect of ever getting an answer to ninety-nine of the puzzles about the world and man which perplex it, in order to stand even a faint chance of solving the hundredth.

I suppose the experience of a humble student of philosophy is, in this respect, sufficiently typical of the experience of abler and better men. Year after year, as one tries to keep abreast with the progress of one's own special subject, one finds one has to drop one's acquaintance with branch after branch of science or history in which one is interested, and one is fortunate if, even within the limits of one's own science, one has not increasingly to confine one's attention to a few special points. One has in the end, as a rule, to give up the hope of ever acquiring any extensive knowledge either of the course of nature or of the history of man, in order to gain a little light on some narrowly restricted portion of the field, and one may be pardoned if one frequently doubts whether the game was after all worth the candle. Who will say with confidence, at the end of a long life of scientific study directed upon some well defined class of objects, that he has reached an answer to even one hundredth part of the questions with which he began? or who will declare with complete sincerity that the intellectual satisfaction he derives from the answer to the one question really compensates the sense of failure with which he looks back on the ninety and nine?[1]

[1] Faust's complaint, I take it, admits of no real retort:—

"O glücklich, wer noch hoffen kann
Aus diesem Meer des Irrthums aufzutauchen!
Was man nicht weiss, das eben brauchte man,
Und was man weiss, kann man nicht brauchen."—*Faust*, i. 711.

One naturally thinks of Browning's "Grammarian," but, from the point of view of the individual's satisfaction, his case rests on nothing better than an appeal to the unknown possibilities of a future life. From the "altruistic" point of view, no doubt, the case is altered.

Not to speak of the way in which general æsthetic and literary culture has to be sacrificed to the demands of the special study. Darwin's well-known confession of the gradual atrophy of this side of his original character is only an extreme example of a process that any student *ex professo* who takes his subject seriously may detect in himself before he reaches the age of thirty. Once more, I contend, you are in the old dilemma: you must either remain in the condition of the mere gifted dilettante or you must consent to the mutilation of your mental nature. Either you must shilly-shally between two masters or you must consent to serve one for a starvation wage. And either alternative means failure to get what you really wanted out of life.

We have not even yet done with the long list of sacrifices which the student is called upon to make for the sake of proficiency in his special subject. Nothing has as yet been said of the repression of social affections and tendencies which is in most cases demanded by the single-minded pursuit of intellectual satisfaction. I do not, of course, mean to endorse in all its crudity the saying of Tennyson's character that "wife and children drag the artist down," nor yet the blunter saying of one of the personages in Zola's *L'Œuvre*, to the effect that "il faut que l'artiste donne sa virilité a son œuvre;" but I do maintain that no man—or at least very few men can devote themselves to intellectual work without having to forego indulgences of the social and family affections, for lack of which they feel their lives the poorer. The real follower of a science, who is working not for a lucrative chair or a baronetcy or an "European" reputation, but for the satisfaction of his own thirst for knowledge, knows full well that the time which is required for the cultivation of social and family relations has to be taken from his chosen pursuits. A whole essay might be written, were this the place for it, upon the moral virtues of idleness. Without what is euphemistically called "leisure,"—in other words, without the periods of "idleness" in which we can indulge in the luxury of "folding our legs and having our talk out,"[1] a man may be benevolent,

[1] The reader will recollect that it was of so self-denying a philanthropist as Wesley that Dr. Johnson used the phrase which I have put into inverted commas. See Boswell on *Tuesday, March 31st*, 1778.

he may be a practical philanthropist, but he cannot successfully develop the full relations of social intimacy and friendship.

Now there is no reason to suppose that the follower of a science or an art by nature feels the need of these social affections and intimacies less than any one else; yet without "wasting time" which might have been given to intellectual work he cannot well find the leisure to indulge himself in them. He knows that the moment he begins to be in request as a genial and fascinating talker at cultivated tables, a frequenter of hospitable and kindly social circles, his work is in danger of suffering. And what is true of the intimacies of the social must surely be no less true of the dearer and closer intimacies of the family circle. How many intellectual workers can find the time, without neglecting their work, to give themselves up to the cultivation of conjugal and parental relations? Intellectual work taken seriously is a tyrant that grudges nothing more than the ample periods of bodily and mental leisure that are required in order fully to know or to love those around us. In the pressure of our professional obligations we simply have not the time to love as we could wish. Truth—philosophic truth at any rate—is only too much like the treasure of the Nibelung:—

> Nur wer der Minne Macht versagt,
> Nur wer der Liebe Lust verjagt,
> Nur der erzielt sich den Zauber,
> Zum Reif zu zwingen das Gold.

For, after all, love and friendship need for their full enjoyment the quick brain as well as the warm heart, and you cannot realise their full capacities if you come to them jaded and weary in the interval between one spell of intellectual work that exhausts all your energies and another.

When all these considerations are brought together and fairly weighed it seems hardly possible to deny that the scholar's life, which we thought at first a typical example of satisfaction found in the consistent following of a principle of self-development, is full of internal anarchy and dissatisfaction. The scholar has after all to choose between the alternatives of being false from time to time to his high calling as a scholar and sacrificing to it many of the things that give life its worth. Either alternative means unmistak-

able failure.[1] All that can come finally out of systematic self-culture is either superficial dilettanteism or the one-sided development of some one feature of our character at the cost of the suppression of others which are equally indispensable to a fully satisfied, perfect, and happy existence. At best we get out of our loyalty to self-culture half of what we wanted, and who will guarantee that we shall find the half, as the proverb has it, "greater than the whole?"

And if this is true of the life which presents above all others favourable opportunities for unimpeded quest after personal satisfaction, how much more is it true of the other ways in which men, with more serious obstacles to contend against, set themselves to gratify whatever they find to be the most persistent want of their nature? Some men desire pleasure, others cannot be content without fame or power, and yet others "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Yet which of all these types of mental striving really gives those who surrender themselves to it all that it promised. What men who have lived for pleasure or fame or power have thought of their successes when they have looked back calmly upon them and contrasted life's performance with its promise, the literature of all ages tells us with an only too unanimous voice. It were superfluous to fill our pages with the universal complaints of the deceitfulness of the lusts of the flesh and the eyes, or the weary cares of wealth, such as must be familiar to every student of any considerable portion of the world's literature. And as to power, who has not heard of Cromwell's "I would rather keep a flock of sheep," and of Danton's "It were better to be a poor fisherman than to meddle with the governing of men"? Even the quest after virtue and purity of heart sought for its own sake is apt to end in heart-burning and the shame of capitulation to the enemy, and the sense that one is no nearer the goal after a life of unremitting self-discipline than when one first began. For, for morality at least, there is no way out of the *impasse* so graphically described by St. Paul, "that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate,

[1] One might add that even your hundredth question never gets a *final* answer. By sacrificing everything else to the pursuit of knowledge you only come at last with Faust to the discovery "dass wir nichts wissen können." But that line of thought will attract our attention in a later chapter on the Goal of Ethics.

that do I . . . the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans vii. 15-19). Indeed what is it but thoughtlessness and shortness of moral vision that can keep us from feeling ourselves, even in the moment of our greatest "moral victories," no nearer the satisfaction of our "thirst after righteousness" than if we had remained to human judgment as well as to God's the "chief of sinners"?

Each and every of thes evarious practical ends calls us to sacrifice to it one source of contentment, one element in our original character, after another; and of which of them can it be said that they in the end give us the permanent content and full development of our natural powers for which we looked? There are men who could not be content without wealth or power, and most of us would, I suppose, not be content without attempting to cultivate some of the qualities which are recognised as laudable by the ethical code of our society or by our own private judgment; yet which of us will say that he is really content when he has got the thing for which he has lived?[1] The experience not of here and there a few malcontents, but of the intelligent of all ages, seems to proclaim that if it is nothing but full and lasting satisfaction for our own cravings that we seek of the world our heart is set upon the unattainable. We have at best the choice of being discontented because we are not setting ourselves to realise some definite object at all costs, or disappointed because we have, as far as our position permits us, realised our object and found it not worth the price we have had to pay for it. To parody a well-known saying of Strauss, we may affirm that half thinking mankind are unhappy because they do not know what they want, and the other half because they know enough about it to know that it is unattainable. Or if one succeeds in escaping from both classes it is only by ceasing to think about the matter at all, and passively accepting the routine of life without being moved either to disgust at the present or hope for the future.

[1] Renan even speaks in a characteristic sentence—I think in *Les Évangiles*—of the pleasure it gives him to see Jesus, the most virtuous of men, suggesting with a gentle irony to the Pharisees that virtue is after all more than half a delusion. The sentiment is perhaps more in the spirit of Renan than in that of the person to whom he ascribes it, yet who does not feel the element of truth it contains?

But this almost animal-like acquiescence in a life of routine duties and momentary pleasures is something far other than the lasting and ever-progressing satisfaction that comes from attainment of a supreme end. It is indeed an ignoble renunciation of the most essential and most universal characteristic of humanity—the power to transform one's environment instead of waiting to be transformed by it. There is, I know, such a thing as a noble acquiescence in the routine of life such as finds expression in Herbert's well-known lines about sweeping a room for God and God's laws, and of *this* we shall have to speak in a later place when we come to deal with the ethical aspects of religion. The very different spirit of which we are talking here is one of acquiescence, not from religious reverence towards a more than human order in which our imperfect works are somehow made perfect, but from mere despair. It is the spirit in which Candide set himself to cultivate his garden.[1] Superficially like the noble and devout resignation of Herbert or of the Stoics, this ignoble feeling is really separated from theirs by a whole world's width. But to the one or the other we must assuredly come, if we take life and its experiences seriously, before we can escape from the alternative of discontent and disappointment. So long as we rest short of one or the other form of resignation to the course of events, the fate of Midas is a parable of all of us. And which of us that has not learned the lesson of the higher or acquired the habit of the lower submission would hesitate to make a compact on the same terms as Faust, if only he could find a bidder?

These thoughts, however, are manifestly leading us a little away from our immediate subject, and we must therefore keep them in check. Enough that we believe ourselves to have shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that really thoroughgoing systematic self-cultivation is pursuing an ideal which only exists in name. Of the results of action directed towards

[1] Voltaire, *Candide* 30.—Je sais aussi, dit Candide, qu'il faut cultiver notre jardin. Vous avez raison, dit Pangloss; car, quand l'homme fut mis dans le jardin d'Eden, il y fut mis *ut operaretur eum*, pour qu'il travaillât; ce que prouve que l'homme n'est pas né pour le repos. Travaillons sans raisonner, dit Martin, c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable." I hope my remarks in the text will not be construed as a mark of disrespect for the memory of a good man, to whom all humane and intelligent men must feel that the world owes a debt of gratitude which it has by no means fully acknowledged.

self-attainment we may surely say, with as much truth, at least, as of the chance gifts of fortune—

> There's something comes to us in life,
> But more is taken quite away.

If you do not follow after some one ideal with all your heart you will obtain nothing; if you do, you will not obtain the half of what you want. Yet what other destiny could reasonably be expected for a being like man, suspended for ever between the antithetic poles of godhead and animalism? Serene content is natural in a god who has now and always just that which he wants, or in an animal that, so long as it is well fed and not made to work, never wants anything that it has not got—but in man, whose glory and shame at once it is to be always craving for that which he has not? Let us turn from the sophistries by which a shallow optimism would seek to blind us to the essential elements of our amphibian position in pitying silence. There are those who can entertain no doubt that all things are working together for good to them so long as their table is well spread, their digestion sound, and their balance at the bank satisfactory. No stirrings of wrath or shame rise in their breasts when they contrast the much abandoned in the course of years with the little retained, the much attempted with the little achieved; they are warm, they are fed, and they have every prospect of being warmed and fed to the end of their days. It is not to such that our argument is addressed, and it would not become us to waste another word in the vain attempt to make them fathom it. *Non ragionam di lor.*

Let us rather pass on without more ado to the examination of some considerations which may appeal to men of a nobler mould in arrest of judgment upon the illusoriness of our ethical ideals. How will it be, one might ask, if we put all thought of personal satisfaction behind us and avowedly live simply for the spread of culture and content among our fellow-men? Morality, one will say, is no doubt an unsatisfactory business if you go into it chiefly or mainly with the purpose of reaping personal gratification from it. But what if you are willing to forget all narrowly personal ends and to live for the diffusion of sources of satisfaction of a lasting kind over a wide social area, whether by devoting yourself to works of direct benevol-

ence, or by giving yourself to the disinterested prosecution of some art or science? You will not, in this way, gain adequate satisfaction for yourself nor yet achieve it for anyone else. What then? you will have done something to bring a little added satisfaction into many lives. You will not, by your scientific pursuits, succeed in answering one hundredth of the questions that perplex you; but you will have done a little towards making it possible for them to be answered by another in the fulness of time. Here then, might we not say, you may find the content that the quest after self-culture failed so utterly to bring. When your trifling achievements of whatever kind are regarded not by themselves, as your mere private gains, but as contributions to the general mass of social progress they will cease to appear petty and worthless; the world, if not yourself, will be really the richer for them. Here then is the secret of contentment; forget yourself entirely in some work productive of final satisfaction to a wider circle, and you will be happy. If you cannot win happiness by consistency and thoroughness in enlightened self-seeking, you may none the less find it is thorough-going and unremitting social service.

Let us examine for a little space the claims of this new ideal to practicability. It cannot, of course, be denied that there is abundant practical wisdom in the recommendations we have tried to indicate in the preceding few sentences. For purposes of everyday practice it is perfectly true that the only way to escape discontent and the sense of utter failure in life is to forget yourself in your work. It is only by the hope that the results of our work, wretchedly inadequate as they must be when compared with our ideals of personal completeness and satisfaction, will help some one else working on the same lines to advance a little further than we have been able to do that we can avoid sheer disgust at our own dismal ill-success. And the reason why, in spite of all we have said in the last page or two, the life of devotion to scientific pursuits is on the whole not intolerable, is that the student of science early learns to take this view of himself and his work, and to think more of the importance to mankind of the interpretation of Nature than of himself as the person to interpret it.

But success in practice, as we have said in an earlier

chapter, comes as often as not from our refusal to think out our assumptions to their logical results. The very secret of that wide-spread dissatisfaction with ourselves, which is so common a feature of the intellectual life of to-day and is oddly called by sentimentalists the *Weltschmerz*, lies in our increasing desire to be logical in our actions and to be really sure that a thing will be finally worth doing before we take it in hand. We are perhaps no weaker of purpose when once we can see our way clear than our great-grandfathers, but we—at least those of us who think at all—are clearer-headed and see more sides to every question of practice than they did, and consequently achieve less. Our mental malady—if it be a malady—is not so much constitutional apathy or irresolution as a "scruple of thinking too precisely on the event," and that is why there is perhaps no figure in literature whom we are so well fitted to understand as Hamlet, the perennial type of that division of the intellect against the promptings of impulse which we all find in ourselves, and no philosopher who speaks more directly to our hearts than Schopenhauer, who has exaggerated this self-distraction into an ultimate metaphysical principle.[1] Hence we must not argue from the general satisfactoriness of a certain ideal for unreflecting action that it is finally satisfactory from the theoretical point of view to the logical mind. And it will not, I imagine, be denied that an ideal which is satisfactory only so long as you ask no questions about its coherency is no true or final ideal, nor yet that a principle which is logically incoherent must sooner or later break down in practice. A principle of action which cannot stand investigation is at best a mere make-shift, unless one is prepared openly to adopt the doctrine that the truth of a theory is only another name for its practical convenience.

What then can he said as to the theoretical possibility of

[1] There is much food for reflection in R. L. Stevenson's fable about the sinking ship. I quote the concluding sentences for the benefit of readers to whom so suggestive an apologue may be new. It must be premised that the captain of the sinking vessel has just found one of the hands smoking in the powder magazine. "'For my own poor part,' says the captain, 'I should despise the man who, even on board a sinking ship, should omit to take a pill or to wind up his watch. That, my friend, would not be the human attitude.' 'I beg pardon, sir,' said Mr. Spoker, 'but what is precisely the difference between shaving in a sinking ship and smoking in a powder magazine?' 'Or doing anything at all in any conceivable circumstances?' cried the captain. 'Perfectly conclusive; give me a cigar.' Two minutes afterwards the ship blew up with a glorious detonation."

following with success the ideal of useful social work? To begin with, we may fairly recur to a consideration which has already occupied us in the previous chapter. We may fairly insist that the "self-neglect" inseparable from such a course of life is bound, sooner or later, to avenge itself. If it is true that no normal man can give himself up to the quest of individual satisfaction and culture without being smitten from time to time with remorse at the thought of the opportunities of social usefulness he has sacrificed to self, it is surely no less true that you cannot give your life up to unremitting disinterested toil without being repeatedly moved to discontent and self-censure as you think of opportunities of enjoyment and self-culture which have been irrecoverably thrown away. You cannot but feel from time to time that your own life has been starved in the interests of work which brings you no compensation for your sacrifices, and I can see no good reason in moral theory why this kind of regret should be regarded as necessarily less ethically justifiable than the other, to say nothing of the absurdity which would arise from making it a general principle that *every* man should starve his own soul. It is impossible not to feel that there was an element of truth as well as of pathos in the remark which the dying Laplace is truly or falsely said to have uttered about the labours embodied in his *Mécanique céleste:* "Tout cela, voyez-vous, n'est que des blagues, rien n'est vrai que l'amour." Nor would many of us think Faust to blame for his decision to exchange a life of weary soul-deadening labour for one with full opportunity for enjoyment and the free play of physical and mental powers.

I do not propose to enlarge here upon these obvious topics; I prefer rather to call attention to another side of the question which is more likely to be overlooked. There is an element of irrationality which seems to be ineradicable from the life of mere social service, and it is this. Your labours seem to be at best directed to securing for your contemporaries or your descendants a small degree of the very same satisfactions which proved so unsatisfactory when we discussed the final value to yourself of a much greater quantity of them. What is it in fact that you propose to yourself as the results to be secured by a life devoted to the service of society? You hope, in company with other workers in the same field, to contribute

to the production of a social system under which the lives of the individual members of the community shall be richer in permanent and unconditional satisfactions than they are at present. In this sense surely we may say that the general happiness of the community is the end of all social activity. And, once more, how is it intended to effect this end? You propose to secure, in a way which existing social institutions by themselves do not, to as many individuals as possible adequate food, warm clothing, and in general the requisites of a physically healthy existence. Further, you propose to "educate" the community, to "raise the standard of public taste," and so to provide future individuals with sources of satisfaction of a more lasting and unconditional kind than those connected with the mere gratification of the bodily appetites.

On the whole, then, the objects of disinterested social activity may be said to be three,—to secure to as large a proportion of the community as possible the conditions of a healthy physical life, to give them abundant leisure, and to provide them with tastes which will enable them to occupy that leisure in pursuits at once productive of enjoyment to themselves and not productive of suffering to others. How far are such ends capable of being consistently attained by the means at our disposal? We are constantly talking about the duty or the happiness of working for the common good of mankind in a loose rhetorical way that ignores altogether the very real difficulties with which our problem is beset. To begin with the most obvious of these difficulties. It is clear that, except upon principles other than those of the disinterested benevolence we are now discussing, your aim ought to be to secure for all mankind or for as wide an area as you possibly can those increased satisfactions which you expect to be created by your unselfish labours. Differential treatment of individuals or classes, where there is nothing in the circumstances of the case to call for differential treatment, is manifestly irrational and indefensible. Yet we may reasonably doubt whether any effective social service can be performed without making distinctions between more and less favoured classes and individuals which are theoretically unjust. The success of most schemes of social amelioration seems to depend upon the condition that they shall *not* become universal, but

shall exalt one class or body of individuals for whose benefit they happen to be adapted at the expense of others, who on all the grounds upon which an appeal can be made to benevolent sentiment are no less entitled to consideration.

For instance, compassion moves you to exert yourself to find labour for the unemployed, and in doing so you expose the labourers already in work to a competition which tends to reduce a number of them to the very condition you felt to be so intolerable. You will "educate" the multitude, and the result of your benevolent exertions is to create an amount of competition for all professional posts entirely out of proportion to the number of vacancies, and at the same time to draft off numbers of persons of both sexes from employments in which, if you had left them alone, they would have been contented themselves and not have been driving some less fortunate rival to the verge of madness or suicide at every step in their progress through life. When one thinks of the numbers of persons of both sexes who are dragging out a lonely existence on a pittance earned in some minor professional post, and reflects that but for the education which has given them tastes beyond their means to gratify they might in some modest commercial position be leading contented lives amid all the affections of a family, one sometimes feels inclined to speak of the policy of indiscriminate education in language which would startle and pain the philanthropist.[1]

The same is true, wherever you choose to turn your attention, of all humanising and civilising effort. You toil devotedly and from motives of the deepest compassion for the spread of civilisation over the world. Yet every advance of civilisation is procured by the speedy or slow extermination of less civilised races, who might seem to have some claim on our compassion and benevolence. You set yourself to improve the conditions of one class or set of people in the community, and you can only obtain your end at the cost of driving some other class out of existence. Nor is it easy to see how things could possibly be otherwise. The full blessings of civilisation have always been enjoyed by the comparatively few at the expense of the greater many. When

[1] Consider again, the influence of trade unions and similar organisations on that vast body of "unskilled" labour which lies outside them.

a late writer undertook to prove that national wealth and the misery of the labouring classes have increased *pari passu*, he intended only to indict as unjust certain peculiar features in our existing industrial system, but he seems to me at the same time to have incidentially illustrated, though with gross exaggeration, an inevitable feature of the advance of civilisation. After all, every advance in civilisation means the driving out of existence of all those who do not possess the requisite power of adapting themselves to the altered environment, and these must always be an appreciable proportion of the population. Every philanthropic and benevolent institution that is really effective must be regarded as creating a favourable variation in the persons of those who have come under its influence and partaken of its benefits, and as thereby discriminating against the rest of their competitors, who have not shared the same advantages. I know of course that it is a fallacy to suppose that no one can profit except by the loss of every one else, but I am not so clear that any one can profit except by the loss of some one else.

Consider an example or two which will make my meaning clearer. The inventor of an important mechanical process by which one man is enabled to do the work of several is commonly regarded as a social benefactor, on the ground that his invention cheapens the price to the consumers of some necessary or comfort of life. As far as this statement goes, it is of course correct. It is perfectly true that the inventor, in making his own fortune, at the same time makes those of others who introduce his contrivance into their workshops or factory, and also saves the average non-productive consumer expense.[1] But there is surely another side to the question. What is to become of the men whose employment is gone as soon as the manufacturer finds that the new machine process will enable him to save by dismissing them? Why, you say, they are drafted off into other trades. True, and it would be a sufficient answer if labour-saving machinery could only be introduced into one or two special branches of industry. But suppose, as is the case, employers are introducing such machinery into all or most trades simultaneously, so that

[1] I mean by this awkward expression, of course, the consumer who *as regards the special article in question* is a consumer only and not a producer.

there is a general fall in the number of workmen required? You answer: the invention of the new machines of various kinds gives an added impetus to the various branches of industry employed in their manufacture. For instance, vastly more men will be needed at the various iron and steel works than formerly in consequence of the orders for the new labour-saving inventions. True, but is it likely that *all* those who lose their employment in consequence of the new inventions will find their way into the iron and steel works? And what is to happen when improved machinery is introduced into the manufacture of machinery? Are we to come in the end to a state in which everybody is getting his living by making labour-saving machinery for somebody else? Would not that be a little too much like the condition of the islanders of fable who earned a precarious living by taking in each other's washing? Or perhaps you argue that though the introduction of the new machinery may cause distress for a time, yet in the next generation every one will benefit by it—the sufferers having by this time been got more or less satisfactorily out of the world. But the next generation will have its own labour-saving inventions and its consequent social problems. It would therefore seem that, if we are going consistently to follow the principle of universal benevolence, those socialists who allow their theories to lead them into downright hatred of the labour-saving machines of our civilisation are nearer the truth than the rest of us.

It might be urged that the increased cheapness of production will give fresh stimulus to export trade to other countries, and thus lead to an increased demand for labour. Does not this, however, simply transfer the problem one stage further away from home? If you are going to find a market abroad for your products, some one else will be debarred from exploiting the same market. If Chinese and Japanese are to buy English wares they must spend less on German or on home-made wares, etc. So some one loses after all. Or again, apart from the question of exportation, you might simply argue that the new appliances will enable the manufacturer to keep on all his old hands and even engage more because the lowered prices enable him to sell such quantities of his wares as to realise vastly enhanced profits. That is true, and it explains

why in the end society is the better for machinery. But somebody has had to be driven out of existence meanwhile.

My argument in the last paragraph, of course, only applies to the case of machinery which for a time throws the old operatives in the trades into which it is introduced out of employment. I am not attacking an important engine of social progress, but only indicating certain prices which have sometimes to be paid for progress. Some one seems to suffer at every step, and the utmost we can hope is that on the whole the sufferers are fewer than those who are benefited. But *universal* benevolence, if it could be consistent with itself, would "wish no living thing to suffer pain," and would therefore lead to no progress.

I do not, of course, mean to argue here against the invention of machinery, or to deny that the advances in civilisation it assists are sometimes worth the price we pay for them. My point is simply that you cannot have the advance without paying the price. Every step forwards is taken at the cost of creating an artificial inequality which drives some one down into the depths of want, and we may therefore fairly say that one chief function of benevolent social activity is to heal the wounds it has itself created. You have to feed the beggar and the pauper largely because you have yourself made him what he is. The merely formal aspect of this contradiction was long ago seized by Blake in lines which we all know by heart—

> Pity would be no more,
> If we did not make somebody poor,
> And Mercy no more could be
> If all were as happy as we.[1]

I am far from denying that the worth of the blessings of a high degree of civilisation may be so great as to outweigh the misery which has to be inflicted on those who perish in the course of our progress towards it, or are reduced to the position of mere ministers to the cultivated enjoyments of the select few; but I do protest against any estimate of the moral satisfactoriness of civilising work which tacitly ignores this

[1] I remember once hearing it argued in a sermon that it is immoral and impious to attempt the abolition of poverty for this very reason, and also because the Scripture says, "The poor ye have always with you."

mass of artificially created misery. My object is not to discourage benevolent effort of any kind, whether it takes the form of creating a favourable variation in the persons of a select few or relieving the distress of those against whom we have by our own civilising agencies discriminated, but merely to point out the radical inconsistency and self-contradictoriness of the ideal of benevolent or civilising activity. You cannot—this is the sum of my contention—systematically relieve human misery without at the same time and by the very same act creating fresh misery somewhere. The utmost we have a right to hope for, as a result of our exertions, is that if they are well directed, the misery they cause may be less intense or less widely diffused than that they remove. No thought brings more pain to the benevolent sentimentalist than the thought that civilisation is one long struggle or war of extermination, in which the less fitted to survive go down before the more fit as inevitably as if the issue were fought out with guns and bayonets instead of with brains. Yet the benevolent sentimentalist is all his life long aiding by every benevolent act in such a war of extermination, and society may think itself fortunate if he does not contrive to prolong the agonies of the struggle by assisting ineffectually the losing side. The more thoroughly benevolent effort becomes organised under the guidance of clear sighted and capable men like some of our C.O.S. leaders, the more openly does it proclaim itself as an auxiliary in the war waged by the more against the less fit.[1]

Herein lies the truly laughable paradox of benevolence; benevolence has its spring in our pity for the unfit and incapacitated, yet the moment you organise it on such lines as to prevent it becoming a social pest it stands revealed as a potent agent in the work of their extermination. It is not even true that those you favour by your benevolent institutions are primarily of necessity more "fit" than those at whose cost you favour them. It is largely by the mere accident of having been the recipients of your favour that they become the "fit." True, all "organisation" of benevolence aims at avoiding this

[1] This is sometimes forgotten when "charity" is indiscriminately condemned as only serving to keep the less fit from the destruction which social progress is bringing upon them. The charge is only true of misdirected charity.

baseless favouritism by selecting as the recipients of favour only those who can approve themselves as already "deserving"; but organised benevolence is thus brought into direct contradiction with those sentiments of compassion in which all benevolence takes its rise. Is not this the reason why those who have with most energy and insight given their lives to the work of social amelioration seem in the end to be of all men the least liable to any sentimental delusions about the effects of their activity? They have seen too much of the self-contradictory results of benevolence to expect from it what the well-intentioned and unexperienced expect. Not to insist upon the still more awkward question whether the recipients of benevolence are in the majority of cases themselves the happier for all that has been done for them. One needs at least to be careful lest the net results of one's social activity should not be just to make the "masses" sensible of burdens which neither we nor they can abolish.

Yet, you may say, it remains in spite of all objections a palpable fact that there is such a thing as social progress. After all, improved conditions of sanitation, a higher standard of education, an enlightened penal system, and the rest of the objects for which philanthropists have laboured, are things of value and make life more worth living. No doubt, to those who are in a position to profit by them, but not to those who have had to be sacrificed to their attainments in one way or another. With very few exceptions, the blessings of civilisation are after all instances of the securing of a high and rich type of satisfaction for a comparatively narrow community at the expense of loss to a wider area, and need, therefore, for their justification, the admission that the principle of what we have called "intensive" morality be admitted as equally valid with that of "extensive" morality. Wars, plagues, and fires, which openly secure certain advantages to the survivors at the cost of enormous loss of life or infliction of suffering upon the relatively less fit, have notoriously been among the most direct and potent agents of social progress.

And though you may live for the good of your class or your country with considerable success, I do not see how the good of class or country is to be brought about except at the cost of loss to other classes and countries.

Patriotism and *esprit de corps* seem to involve a compromise between the principles of universal benevolence and self-cultivation. It is at least as arbitrary and as contrary to mere logic to prefer your class or your country before other classes and countries, of which you can only say that they do not happen to be yours, as to prefer yourself before other individuals on the ground that after all they are not you. To make the principle of benevolence thoroughly self-consistent you ought to be able to effect the gain of every one at the loss of no one, and this seems out of the question.

You are therefore placed in this dilemma: If you will not consent to sacrifice some one, your benevolence will never produce any effects; if your benevolence takes practical effect you must have allowed yourself to prefer a certain class or body of persons to others upon grounds which, from the standpoint of the principle of benevolence, are arbitrary and irrational. Under our existing social arrangements the effects of such arbitrary preference are minimised by the fact that the work of benevolence is carried on principally by individuals and private organisations working for various class interests which more or less neutralise one another. Under a regime in which the task of amelioration were intrusted to the central administrative power, the necessity of avoiding social disorganisation and revolution would compel the administration consciously to prefer a moderate gain to a wider area of the subject population before a greater gain to a narrower section of the community. But the choice would be dictated by necessity rather than by moral principle. You cannot prove that it is reasonable to prefer a widely diffused though mediocre degree of civilisation to a less widely diffused but more thorough cultivation except by appealing to the danger of social dissolution, and you thus expose yourself to the question whether the value of a civilisation is to be measured exclusively by its duration.

In any case it should be clear that the utmost either individual or governmental care can effect is to minimise, not to abolish, the loss and suffering which social advance entails, and we are therefore justified, I think, in asserting that the ideal of universal benevolence is as self-contradictory and incapable of realisation in practice as the ideals of complete

self-culture. As before, we are driven to admit that any moral ideal that is more than a name must be marked by compromise. It is on the whole by submitting to the compromise between conflicting ideals of duty demanded of me by "my station and its duties," that I do the most good to my fellows as well as make the most of myself. In my station and its duties inconsistent elements are brought together without any recognisable principles; but it is just by the fact that the majority of men are inconsistent and fail to push the principles involved in their various moral judgments to their logical issue, that society is saved from disappearing in consequence of a one-sided fidelity to the claims of self on the one hand, or of universal benevolence on the other.

It is part of the recognised duties of my station to be true to myself and my "order"—up to a certain point; it is another part of those recognised duties to take upon me certain more or less public burdens, to labour in various ways for the improvement of the condition of the "lower orders," and so forth. Roughly, social tradition has assigned the boundaries to both legitimate self-consideration and legitimate benevolence, and it is because most men accept the boundaries so assigned, without troubling about the theoretical consistency of their principles, that, on the whole, the industrious individual finds his own content in the discharge of the duties of his station, and that social contentment is at the same time promoted. It is strictly true that the way to practical success in life is not to consider too closely the theoretical bearings of your conduct, but to accept your duties as defined for you by the convenient system of compromise embodied in the existing code of your "order,"—or of those members of it who take life and its responsibilities with practical earnestness,—and not to trouble about moral philosophy. Without any of the irony which marks a well known passage in Mr. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, we may apply to our subject the familiar lines of Goethe—

> Die hohe Kraft
> Der Wissenschaft
> Der ganzen Welt verborgen!
> Und wer nicht denkt,
> Dem wird sie geschenkt,
> Er hat sie ohne Sorgen!

Compromise, then, we say, and compromise between diametrically opposed principles, is the very essence of any moral ideal which can be regarded as even remotely practical—the very atmosphere and vital breath of our active life. With more precision we should, I take it, be justified in defining the highest practical moral ideal as that of a system of stable social institutions which secure to each of the individuals living under them the most complete and permanent satisfaction compatible with the enjoyment of similar satisfaction by the rest of the community. It is clear that a full defence of our definition would lead us into the very thick of the controversy about pleasure as the one and only good, and equally clear that we are committed by the principles which have guided us in framing our definition (and have been already explained to some extent in the third chapter) to the adoption, with some obvious and important modifications, of the Hedonist side of the argument. In our next chapter we intend, therefore, to discuss the connection of our view with various forms of Hedonism, and to defend what seems to us the essence of the Hedonist position in ethics against current criticism in some detail. Meanwhile, if any one feels it incumbent on him to give our theory a name, he may, if he pleases, call it a doctrine of Universalistic Ethical Hedonism, taking care of course to recollect what we said in a note to chap. iii. about the difference between Ethical Hedonism and the Psychological Hedonism which we have already rejected.

And though we defer all other discussions about Hedonism, we may just note here that our definition is not liable to one principal objection commonly brought against all forms of Hedonistic ethics. It is frequently urged that Hedonism must be false because of the logical impossibility of ever reaching the end that it sets up. The Hedonistic end is confessedly self-contradictory; therefore, it is said, Hedonism cannot be the ultimate truth. We have, however, admitted all along that a moral end which is practicable must be a mere compromise, and therefore self-contradictory, and may therefore treat the criticism as irrelevant until the general grounds upon which we have based our argument as to the radical inconsistencies involved in all moral action have been

shown to be fallacious. If morality is inevitably a matter of compromise between conflicting tendencies, it must follow that any moral ideal you can formulate will be either impossible or inconsistent with itself. And we have tried in the present chapter to show that this is the case with more than one moral ideal which has found favour with philosophers bent before all things upon reducing things to logical consistency and system.

Our own conviction is that morality, like every other merely partial expression of the facts of life, contains an irrational element that we do not know how to eliminate, and are sure to come upon the moment we begin to investigate seriously the principles which we have in matters of practice to take on trust without examination. We have shown that the one-sided ideals at which we may arrive by exclusive attention to one aspect of practical morality are ultimately quite inconsistent with themselves; we have seen further that such practical social ideals as men can successfully set before them bear on the very face of them the character of compromise. The ideal of "my station and its duties" only looks simple and consistent so long as you are content not to examine it closely. As soon as you look below the surface you find that the duties of your station form an attempt to adjust the claims of two conflicting tendencies, for which no better justification can be offered than that, if the adjustment is not accomplished society cannot hold together, and that it may as well be made along conventional lines. Sound reasons for making the compromise just where the moral conventions of your social order make it are very rarely forthcoming.

The upshot is that only those who do not think, or at least do not think about problems of conduct, can derive lasting satisfaction from the life of "my station and its duties," which is the nearest approach that morality possesses to a coherent ideal. Those who think on these subjects at all are bound to be scandalised by the arbitrariness of the lines along which our customary moral compromises are effected, and are consequently prone to launch out in a career of one-sided devotion to a more logical but less practicable ideal, only to find in the end that what they pursue is not to be obtained.

To be downright in earnest with any practical ideal is in the end to be dissatisfied, and to learn that this too is vanity and vexation of spirit. Unless, indeed, there should be some other sources of content and peace of mind than those accessible to the merely moral man, *i.e.*, to the man who simply sets himself to achieve a certain object and is contented or discontented according as he succeeds or fails. Of this question we shall have to treat at a later stage in the argument, when we come to deal with the characteristics of the "religious" life.

For the present we merely have to urge once more that the nature of our moral ideal—I mean of the ideal really set before themselves by practical men—is conclusive proof of the empirical character of ethical principles and ethical science. The practical moral ideal, as we have seen, is in its inmost nature a compromise, and a compromise of an indefinable kind. There is no one principle which will serve as an Ariadne's clue to guide you through the labyrinthine mazes of moral practice to the final realisation of your purposes. You must combine as best you can inconsistent purposes, you must consciously or unconsciously play the hypocrite, if you are to get from the life of moral activity the results for the sake of which you embark upon it. If your object is self-culture, you have to choose between self-mutilation in one direction for the sake of development in another, and mere superficial dilettanteism, and neither really answers to your original ideal. If your object is social amelioration, you can only procure it at the expense of inflicting the very wounds which you regard it as your mission in life to heal.

Not such would be the issue if one could lay one's hand upon a moral principle that was finally true for metaphysics. Then, if only you could keep true to your principle, mere thoroughness and consistency would "take you to heaven"—the heaven of finding every purpose fulfilled and every wish gratified. As it is living in bondage to impulses and emotions which contain an essential element of irrationality, we cannot but be distracted through life by conflicting purposes, none of which are powerful to give us what our hearts really long for, and our utmost hope is, that by not looking too closely into the logic of our actions we may in practice contrive some

compromise that will content us—so long as we do not examine it with any care. Heaven, the "vision of fulfilled desire," is at best only a *vision*, not a reality to us, and—unless we hereafter discover some point of view from which the imperfections and failures of our practical life may be seen to be made good by their connection with a reality which stands outside and above the region of our human struggle and turmoil—a vision it is likely to remain. So long as we are concerned only with the struggle for the realisation of our purposes, and the ideals created by the struggle, we are manifestly dealing with hypotheses of the most provisional kind—hypotheses each of which roughly represents certain aspects of the moral aspirations and sentiments discernible in ourselves and in the society around us, while no combination of them can produce that final coherency of explanation that we have a right to demand from metaphysics. It were scarcely less bold to assert that the English Constitution can be deduced from the principles of ultimate metaphysical science, than to say the same thing of our convenient practical assumptions about self-realisation and self-sacrifice, culture and benevolence.

If we had to wait before acting our part in the affairs of the world for a completely consistent and satisfactory theory of the moral end, we might sit with our hands folded till the sound of the last trumpet. Fortunately, though an intelligent man will always be able to show plausible grounds for his actions after the event, we do not wait for grounds before acting. Impulse and the habits implanted in us by early training set us in motion before we have time to ask whether the "principle" of our conduct be self-contradictory or not. "Self-love" and compassion will have their outlet in spite of all demonstrations that, from the standpoint of pure logic, it might be reasonable always to let well alone; the "will to live" is prompt to assert itself whenever the emotional tension of unsatisfied anticipation rises beyond a certain pitch, and so the work of the world gets done—irrationally perhaps, but yet effectually. Afterwards, let the intellect and the "will to live" debate the reasonableness of the action at their leisure. In the fable of the sinking ship, to which we have already referred, it might be demonstrated beyond reply that

it is mere superstition to believe in the ultimate superiority of any one course of action over any other; but the fact remained that unless certain actions got the preference over others the ship would infallibly go down with all hands. To object to this *dénouement* of the situation may be illogical; to the philosophic eye it may be all one whether I am drowned now or carried off fifty years hence by bronchitis or paralysis, but if I at this moment have a great objection to instant drowning I shall be justified to myself in doing all I can to keep the vessel afloat. It may be irrational to prefer dying of something else later on to dying now by sea water, but so long as I do prefer it, my escape from the present peril is so much gained to me. A time may come when I shall think myself a fool for not having gone down quietly and made an end of my troubles, but by that time the action will be irrevocable.

That one course to the philosophic eye has no advantage over the other is no reason for not showing a preference for the one which promises me, as at present advised, the more satisfaction. For we have not all the philosophic eye, and those of us who have only use it on rare occasions of meditative profundity. So long as I am not philosophising, but thinking the half-thoughts of the average man, I would distinctly rather be alive than not; and when I philosophise, any argument that will prove death as reasonable as life will also prove life as reasonable as death. As Pyrrho said to his critic, the fact that "to the philosophic eye" life and death are as one may be the best argument *against* suicide. You cannot argue from the ultimate unsatisfactoriness of every course of action that a man should not take the course which promises him most satisfaction — so long as he does not trouble himself with questions of ultimate satisfactoriness. The argument that *unless* moral principles can be shown to have final and full metaphysical truth one must become a practical indifferentist would only be the shallow, old fatalistic argument in a new disguise. For practice we always have our convenient if illogical ideal of working for the obtaining of individual satisfactions of a permanent and unconditional kind, so long as they can be secured without a disproportionate cost to ourselves and others, and for the distribution of such satisfactions over as wide a social area as is possible. If we

ask what *is* a disproportionate cost or what distribution *is* possible, ethical science can of course furnish us with no certain answer; we must be content to appeal to the unscientific inductions from experience embodied in the accepted moral code of our age and country, or failing that, in our own individual judgment. This concludes what I have to say about moral ideals. I will now devote the rest of this chapter to a series of considerations about the nature of moral progress.

Before going on to deal with specifically ethical progress it will be necessary for us to clear our minds of some mistaken ideas about progress in general. There is in particular one view which has found some favour with thinkers during the last half century which appears to me radically mischievous. Progress is often spoken of as if it were an ultimate reality, not only in human life, but in the economy of the universe. It is frequently asserted as a final philosophical truth, vouched for by the fact of "evolution," that the universe is in a constant state of progress from lower to higher forms of organised existence. Nay, among metaphysicians, we have even heard sometimes of a progressive evolution which is supposed to be going on in the character of the Deity. Schelling has thoughts of this kind, and Renan loved to trifle with them in his characteristic vein of urbane infantile irony.[1] All these ideas, however expressed, seem to us liable to serious misconstruction, and we propose therefore briefly to give our reasons for holding that, from the point of view of the metaphysician, who will be content with nothing less than exact truth about the ultimate constitution of the universe, all progress is an illusion—in other words, that it is a phenomenon which disappears the moment you cease to concentrate your attention on some one subordinate part of the whole world of facts to the neglect of all the rest.

To begin with, it ought to be clear that "progress" is not the same thing with mere "evolution or "development." Progress and retrogression are both alike processes of development or "evolution." Development or evolution is only to be called progress when the successive stages of the

[1] See the preface to *Les Apôtres*.

development are marked by growing approximation to an ideal which is judged to be good or worthy. Hence it is manifest that all talk of progress in Nature involves a reference to purely human standards of valuation. For instance, when we speak of the course of organic evolution as having been marked by "progress" from lower to higher types of organic life, we are tacitly judging of the value of organic types by their approximation to the human type of organisation. From this point of view any circumstance which might gradually render our planet unfit for habitation by the more complicated organisms would in the course of their operation put an end to "progress," though the gradual degeneration of animal life by the disappearance of the structures which failed to adapt themselves to altered conditions of temperature, etc., would be as truly an "evolution" as the gradual production of them has been.

Now the degeneration here contemplated seems to be regarded by many men of science as the not improbable destiny of life upon our planet, while there are said to be reasonable grounds for believing that it may already have overtaken the organisms—if such there have been—that once existed upon certain of the members of our solar system.[1] All the evidence available seems to point to the conclusion that our solar system is slowly passing into a condition in which all differential motion, and consequently all life and all feeling, must ultimately disappear. Hence it must be admitted that popular declamation about the possibilities of endless progress, by which is *meant* of course the endless progress of human society towards the realisation of its ideals, is entirely unsupported by the results of sober physical science. "Evolution"—the gradual establishment of harmony between outer and inner relations—can guarantee us absolutely nothing except upon the supposition which men of science seem agreed to discard as erroneous, that our physical "environment" will never become more hostile to the continuance of human life than it is at present. Hence there is every reason to refuse to regard human progress as a perma-

[1] See, *e.g.* Balfour Stewart's *Conservation of Energy*, p. 153, and Jevons's *Principles of Science*, chap. xxxi.

nent feature of the constitution of the universe, or even of our own small portion of it.

On the other hand, we have absolutely no grounds for denying that the same circumstances which seem destined to make for the extinction of life upon our planet may not, in some way unknown to us, indirectly assist its appearance elsewhere. What from our point of view is sheer loss and retrogression might, if our outlook upon the world were from another quarter, appear as pure gain and progress.[1] But in either case the process only appears as one of progress or the reverse so long as we confine our attention to one limited portion of the universe. If what is our loss is the gain of some other part of the universe, then there is in the universe as a whole neither gain nor loss, but simply compensation.

Even admitting that we have no proof that the disappearance of the "higher" types of organism, and ultimately of all life, from our system might indirectly lead to their reappearance elsewhere, we can easily see that we should have no right to ascribe the loss to the universe as a whole. In our total ignorance of the nature of the psychical life contained in the universe outside the narrow limits of our own immedate surroundings, we should be advancing assertions of a purely groundless kind in making any proposition as to the way in which that life would be affected by the extinction of the human race and the rest of the organic types with which we are acquainted. The sum-total of psychical experience may, for all we know, be as little affected by the disappearance of those finite centres of experience called human souls as the sum-total of the energy of a material system is by the transference of energy from one of its parts to another.

And, whatever we may think upon this last point, it is at least evident that you cannot assert that the universe as a whole either progresses or retrogresses, without violating the most general and indispensable of all methodological principles—the principle that every change has its sufficient reason in the totality of its conditions, or that *ex nihilo nihil fit.* This principle is susceptible of a great variety of different forms of state-

[1] It is natural to think of the hypotheses which have been put forward to explain the presence of life on our planet by supposing it introduced by meteoric fragments of an exploded planet.

ment, none of them quite satisfactorily expressing its meaning without unmeaning "symbolic" additions, but all pointing to the same intellectual necessity of holding that, if you could only see the whole of the facts, you would find that the complete reality after the change is identical with the complete reality before it. The principle cannot indeed be demonstrated, and naturally not, for it is a methodological assumption inevitably involved in all demonstration of anything. But it is amply justified by the consideration that if we abandon it we have at the same time to abandon the whole attempt at rational explanation of anything. There is a fundamental inconsistency in all theories of the world which allow themselves, for the sake of justifying "free will" or "real creative activity," to desert this principle of identity or causation or uniformity, or whatever else you please to call it. It is true that if you push the principle to its full extent it leads to the conclusion that change is a mere illusion arising from the limitation of our intellectual outlook—what Herbart would call an "accidental aspect" of things, and so ends by abolishing itself, but at the point at which it vanishes explanation also ceases to be possible.

With the doctrine that "rationality" or "explicability" is not the last word about the world we have no quarrel; indeed, on occasion we should be as forward as any one to maintain that experience of every kind contains something more than mere "reason," and is ultimately inexplicable; but we must also insist that so long as you profess to be keeping to the work of explanation you must also keep to the methodological principle. To adhere in general to the methodological principle of sufficient reason, but with a mental reservation in favour of the phenomena of human volition, is, like Diana Capilet, to be "like an old glove," to "go off and on at pleasure." For the sake of making our position on this important point fully clear we shall append a supplementary note at the end of the present chapter, and will refer the reader thither for a completer discussion. We content themselves here with the recognition that the limits of the validity of the principle coincide with the limits of scientific theory. Ultimately valid or not, it is at least so valid that no explanation of anything can afford to disregard it; the moment you cease to apply it you have also to cease from "explaining" things.

Now it is clear that all theories about progress being an ultimate characteristic of the world as a whole come at once into conflict with the methodological principle of sufficient reason. They are all—in whatever form they present themselves, whether enunciated by theosophists or by evolutionary biologists—attempts to get something out of nothing, to find in the event what is not provided for in its conditions. If the principle of sufficient reason be valid, it must be possible to show that all that is included in the event is *in some sense* included in the conditions; the appearance in the event, or "consequent," as it is not altogether happily called by inductive logicians, of any peculiarity which cannot be in some way connected with the conditions—or "antecedents"—as hitherto ascertained, must be sufficient warrant for the assumption that subsequent investigation will reveal the presence of conditions as yet not suspected. Change can only be understood on the principle involved in all attempts at explanation, by showing that if you take into account the *whole* facts, you will find that the reality is the same at last as at first. This is the real gist of all assertions about the occurrence of change being regulated by unchanging law; the "unchangeability" of the "laws" of Nature means that—rightly viewed in their full relation to one another—the "facts" or "things" have not changed. And if the "facts," or the *facies totius universi*, as viewed by an experience capable of taking in all the facts "at a gulp,"[1] do not change, then progress is not an ultimate characteristic of reality, or, in other words, would lose all its meaning for us if we could do what we are always trying with very partial success to do—"see life steadily and see it whole."

In case the foregoing line of argumentation should seem to readers who care little about the abstract logic of scientific method merely formal, I go on to show, by an appeal to more concrete qualities of the processes with which we are familiar in our physical and psychical sciences, that "evolution"—and therefore *a fortiori* progress—loses all meaning as soon as you allow yourself to regard it as characteristic of the whole universe. For "evolution"—however else we may agree to define it—is at any rate universally admitted to be a process

[1] The phrase is Plutarch's; I am sorry to say I cannot at this moment indicate the context.

of the gradual adaptation of "inner" to "outer" relations, or, more specifically, if we adopt the standpoint of biological evolution, of "organism" to "environment." It is assumed then in the very concept of "evolution" that there are two interacting systems concerned in the process, of which one is relatively stable and the other relatively mobile. In the biological world it is the environment which is to all intents and purposes fixed, and the organism which changes from a condition of less to one of greater conformity with the surroundings. In the world of human thought and action, as we have already seen, it becomes more and more the case, as intelligent purposes emerge from the original chaos of instincts and impulses, that the ideals of the organism, remaining themselves relatively fixed, bring about transformations in the environment, which then in turn reacts upon and modifies the social ideals by which it has been itself created. In either case, however, the "evolution" is manifestly a process involving two interacting factors, a more and a less stable. Whatever "evolves" does so under the stress of surroundings which are relatively to itself permanent and fixed; without the pressure of these permanent surroundings there would be nothing to initiate or control the evolutionary process. Now in an imaginary case of an evolution of the "Universe" or "God," one of the two interacting factors—the permanent one—is *ex hypothesi* absent. If "God" or the "Universe" evolved it would be because they were gradually transformed from without by the pressure of external circumstances; which is as much as to say they would not really be "God" or the "Universe"—would not be the whole of reality but only a subordinate part of it.[1]

[1] In denying the evolution of God or the Universe I am assuming that those terms are understood as names for the full and final reality, the formal characteristics of which metaphysics seeks to define. A finite "God" limited by some unknown external reality independent of himself, or a "Universe" dependent upon the will of a creator external to itself, might no doubt be said without contradiction to be capable of evolving. But a finite God is not the Deity of any considerable religion, and a "Universe" with a creator outside it would not be the "Universe" of the philosopher. The theistic reader will understand that I am not expressing any opinion here for or against the hypothesis of a creator "external to" the world. I only argue that if there is a God external to the world, the term "Universe" properly includes both God and the world together. In our chapter on "Religion" we shall see that there is most certainly a sense in which "God" is less than the "Absolute" or "Universe," and may therefore be said to "evolve" without inherent absurdity.

The whole, we can now see, cannot, without absurdity, be said to "evolve" at all, nor yet to "progress." If the Universe as a whole changes, the process of change must be one not of "evolution" but of conditionless and inexplicable "absolute becoming." It would be a series of changes taking place under pressure of no external conditions, and therefore no evolution; it would be, on the principle *ex nihilo nihil*, a series of changes in which after all nothing is changed, and therefore no progress. In a word, it would be a process absolutely unintelligible to any of us except those, if there are still any of them left, who believe the succession of Hegelian categories, each produced out of the bowels of its predecessor by an internal necessity, to be in some amazing sense an actual movement on the part of things.[1] Universal progress, the "evolution of God," we may see to be phrases which, whatever their meaning, at any rate do not express an ultimate metaphysical truth.

Progress then is not an ultimate reality; it would have no meaning for an experience at once all-embracing and self-consistent; it is only so long as we are compelled to study the facts of life piecemeal, only so long as we "see in part and prophesy in part," that any series of events appears to us to be characterised by progress or the opposite. Or, in Herbartian phrase, progress is only an "accidental aspect" of the partial and incomplete systems into which the single world-system is broken up by our imperfect and fragmentary apprehension. If we could see the whole where we only see the separate parts we should, to resort to our former illustration, find that the whole world-system has neither gained nor lost by the gains or losses of the partial systems, any more than any great material system gains or loses by the transference of energy from one of its component sub-systems to another. The world-system, whether or not "conservative," in the special sense attached to the word in modern physics, is certainly conservative in the sense that it remains unchanged amid all the manifold apparent changes that bewilder us so long as we attend only to the parts and not to the

[1] As to the impossibility of an "absolutes Werden," see further the supplementary note at the end of this chapter. I may also refer to the—in my judgment—unanswerable arguments of Mr. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 500 (first edition).

whole. It follows then that "moral progress" cannot, any more than progress in general, be intelligibly asserted of the world-system as a whole, and would have no meaning for a complete or "pure" experience. From the metaphysical point of view, therefore, for which all that does not belong to "pure" experience must be pronounced illusory, moral progress must manifestly be no more than an illusion.

We may, however, still ask whether progress is or is not a final and ultimate fact for ethics and the other sciences which confine their attention to the phenomena of human life without troubling about the relation of those phenomena to the rest of the contents of the universe. In other words, we may ask how far is the common assumption that the history of civilisation is one of continuous progress borne out by an impartial consideration of the facts of ethics and sociology, apart from metaphysical reflection upon them? Judged by purely human standards, has the history of man's career on the earth been on the whole one of continuous and all-round advance? It is not difficult, I think, to see that the answer to this question must be a negative one. Just as we have found that what when regarded in abstraction appeared to be progress was really when considered in relation to the whole world-system unchanging self-maintenance, so, even within lesser systems, such as the history of our planet or of our species, apparent progress will constantly be found on closer examination to be compensated by corresponding loss. The wider the area of fact over which our observations extend, the fewer traces shall we find of anything like loss or gain to the system under examination as a whole; the more narrowly defined the object of our enquiries the greater the appearance of gain and loss without corresponding compensation.

Take, for instance, the apparent progress of the human race. In numbers, in civilisation, in intelligence, the human race has admittedly advanced greatly even within historical times. But the moment we cease to treat humanity as an isolated phenomenon, and view it in relation to the general life of our planet, we see that these gains to the human species are compensated by losses to the wider system of which humanity is a part. If man has increased in numbers he has exterminated, and is steadily exterminating, whole species of his

animal rivals; he has extirpated from the sites of his towns and cities a whole world of vegetable life of different kinds, and he is even now destroying the forest vegetation of the planet at a rate that apparently threatens within a calculable time to affect the general conditions of organic existence. Thus if there is more sentience and intelligence of a high type upon the planet at this moment than at any previous period of its history, there is probably also vastly less sentience and intelligence of a lower type; what has been gained in intensity has been lost in extent.

In the same way we can see that man has purchased his intellectual and moral advance from the condition of the brute at the cost of losing various more or less physical qualities to which a certain value must certainly be ascribed. Without congregating into great cities and following settled and sedentary ways of life, we could not have gone very far in the development of the speculative intellect, but we have had in the course of the process to sacrifice the quick eye and keen scent as well as the hardy vigour of the nomad semi-savage. We have had to sacrifice too his happy insensibility to pain to such an extent that I suppose most of us would faint with extreme pain under operations which the more primitive races seem to sustain without any visible discomfort. It is said, for instance, of the Maoris, that when boots were first seen among them there was a great demand for the new article of self-adornment, and that natives who had ignorantly bought boots which were too small for their feet would quietly amputate as many toes as might be necessary rather than go barefoot![1] And even amongst ourselves, if medical men may be believed, the difference between the studious and sedentary classes and the robust out-of-door labourers in respect of sensibility to pain is something prodigious.

Look where we will, a close inspection seems to reveal to us compensations alike for the gains and for the losses of civilisation. Nothing in the world is to be had for nothing; the history of the human species and the history of civilisation alike show us how every gain in concentrated intensity of mental life has been paid for by

[1] And what European could endure the agony of the initiatory rites which Australian natives undergo, apparently without wincing?

the sacrifice of something of its original diffused extensity. That man may have life and have it more abundantly, the animal and vegetable species which cannot be turned into ministers to his necessities or his comforts are being slowly exterminated; that civilised man may exercise the full powers of his intellect, his less advanced brethren in America and Australia are being gradually but surely driven out of existence.[1] And, as we have seen, the life that disappears is not simply replaced by fresh life, including all the old qualities along with new ones; if new psychical qualities emerge in the course of man's movement from savagery to civilisation, the old ones also fall away. It is clear then that neither for man nor for life on our planet can the path of evolution be said to be one of pure and simple gain; the gains must be discounted by the various losses at the price of which they have been won.

Yet when we look back on human history it is manifest that, judging by any conceivable standard, the gains accruing to man from his movement out of savagery to civilisation must be reckoned as greater than the accompanying losses. So long as we confine our attention to mankind only, or rather that part of mankind which has really enjoyed the intellectual and æsthetic life of civilisation, the net result of the whole history appears to be an enormous profit. Judging by the only finally intelligible standard of "worth,"—the standard of lasting and unconditional satisfaction,—which of us would hesitate to admit that the life of the instructed intellect and the cultivated taste is many times more than worth the loss of the physical and mental good qualities of savage life? Which of us, among those who are fortunate enough to have a good roof over our heads and a constant supply of wholesome food, but would allow that, even with respect to its material aspects alone, civilisation is superior to savagery? Whether a more comprehensive view of the facts of civilised life would not modify our first judgment is another question, and one that deserves some consideration.

Can we, it might be asked, honestly say, with a full

[1] The remarkable increase in the native population of South Africa consequent on the abolition of native sovereignties may seem to contradict this statement. But thoughtful men, I believe, agree in regarding this increase as a very serious menace to civilisation in that continent.

knowledge of the life of squalor and grinding penury to which our industrial system condemns a large proportion of those who are employed in ministering to the needs of civilisation, that universally and without qualification a condition of things in which those who have are kept in the enjoyments suitable to their refined tastes by the squalid slavery of those who have not is really an advance upon a ruder condition in which, if there were none of the refinements of civilisation for the few, there was at least plentiful food and fresh air for the many? The more clear-headed and thorough-going among our Socialists are evidently, if one may argue from their undisguised hankering after the village commune, of opinion that the advance has not been real. I know, of course, that the market is flooded with all sorts of quack schemes for retaining the high culture which civilisation has brought to the few without the servitude more or less galling which it has imposed upon the many. But, without launching out into a detailed criticism of these semi-socialistic theories, which would be quite out of place in a work like the present, I think we may fairly say that the various schemes of "municipal socialism," "profit sharing," etc., which stop short of aiming at the complete abolition of a wage-earning class dependent upon its masters for the very necessaries of existence, only touch the fringe of the question.

I am far from denying the usefulness of many of these schemes as palliatives of suffering incidental to the progress of civilisation, but I must absolutely deny that any one of them would ever put a final end to that exploitation of the unskilled many by the skilful few on which our modern civilisation is built. While, as for the more thorough-going plans of complete socialism which do propose the abolition of the wage-earning classes and the distribution both of culture and of the labour incidental to it over the whole community indifferently, I need only say here that, even when they are not in open conflict with economic law, they are clearly such as would only succeed in getting rid of the evils of modern civilisation by suppressing its compensations. Under all of them, if want and squalor diminished, so would learning and scientific research and high artistic production. How manifest, for instance, it is that there would

be little opportunity in the idyllic village communities imagined by the late Mr. William Morris for the prosecution of studies involving the use of great libraries or great laboratories. The republic of that illustrious poet's dream would, I fancy, have as little need of chemists or mathematicians—we will not magnify our office by saying "or of philosophers"—as the less lovely republic that guillotined Bailly and Lavoisier. If you are to have a high and vigorous scientific life in your community you must have great and wealthy centres where it may flourish, and without our huge industrial organisation you cannot have these centres.

No doubt there are Socialists who imagine a future in which the wage-earning class might be abolished, and yet all the varied industrial life and its outgrowth, the varied scientific and literary life of our great cities, still continues in unabated vigour. To me, if I must confess it, this seems but the substitution of a prosaic for a poetical dream. Fancies like those of the late Mr. Bellamy, whose noisy rhetorical romance of the future attracted some attention eight or ten years ago, appear to be based upon a complete ignoring of the psychological principle so vigorously enforced by Plato, that no man can be two things at once. I do not deny that a man of science or an artist might give a certain part of his day to such unskilled labour as sweeping or porter's work without necessarily impairing his efficiency as a man of science or an artist, though even so, there would always be the danger that rough manual labour might interfere with that delicacy of hand and touch which are essential qualifications in some sciences and most arts. But do but consider the case of "skilled" labour, *i.e.* labour which requires the elaborate education of the psycho-physical mechanism into certain highly complex and artificial reactions. Labour of this kind not only takes a long apprenticeship to learn, but when learned is rather a "profession" than a mere trade, and, like all other professions, sets its stamp upon the whole physical and psychical character of the labourer. The demand that work of this kind should be executed in the intervals of intellectual exertion amounts to a demand that a man should be efficiently equipped and educated for two professions at once; what *that* means let any man judge who knows by experience how hard it is to fit himself decently for *one!*

As Plato knew long ago, the attempt to unite two professions commonly ends in the degradation of one or both into mere inefficient dilettanteism. The idyllic Socialists, who evidently expect the abolition of the wage-earning class of professional labourers to lead to the disappearance of such forms of industry as cannot be carried on by the exertions of a small village commune without special training, are clearly on sounder psychological ground than this. It is, I fear, an unquestionable fact, distressing as it must be to the sentimentalist, and for the matter of that to every humane man, sentimentalist or not, that you cannot have the fullest literary artistic and scientific culture residing in the chosen few among the community without paying the price of an industrial organisation which condemns huge multitudes to a condition of unremitting joyless toil, which is virtually slavery, and considerable numbers to ever-increasing penury and actual distress. All that we can hope to do is, by benevolent labours properly organised, to palliate and lessen the burden imposed by civilisation on those whose manual labour supplies the necessary physical basis for the growth of culture. 'Tis a hateful fact, but it is best for us, not only as students of ethical theory, but as practical men, to look it now and then in the face without evasion.

If we are asked, then, has the growth of our civilisation really been a progress, we can only answer Yes and No. Knowledge and art and cultivated enjoyment are things of worth, and the development of civilisation has multiplied many times over the quantity of them in the world; but after all the proportion of persons who are able to profit by them is but a small one. Slavery and want and squalor are bad things, and in so far as civilisation is bound up with an industrial system which entails these consequences, civilisation has not been a pure progress. Once more, the impossibility of giving a single answer to a question about progress indicates the radical duality of the ideals we inconsistently attempt to combine in our standard of valuation. If you judge simply by the standard of increased opportunity for full psychical development, and consequent lasting and rich satisfaction for those who can avail themselves of those opportunities, the world must be said to be the richer for the varied forms of intellectual

life which characterise our civilisation. If you judge by the standard of equal diffusion of opportunities of satisfaction among the members of the community, it is not so clear what your answer to our question will be. From the point of view of social justice the pessimist will, I fear, always be able to make out a better case for himself than it is altogether agreeable to contemplate.

Of course our remarks have necessarily been very abstract, and the optimist would not find it difficult to produce extenuating circumstances on which to base a plea in arrest of judgment. One or two optimist arguments may be disposed of beforehand for the benefit of the reader who might otherwise be perplexed by them. (1) It may be said that civilisation may be shown to be a blessing even to its industrial slaves by the decrease in mortality and the increase in population which accompany it. We answer that it is feeling not mere continuance of existence which is the human end. A man would be happier—would have enjoyed a more continuous life of satisfied feeling—who led with average success the life of a healthy and vigorous savage for thirty years, and then was clubbed and eaten by his enemy, than one who lived to be fifty or sixty, but was all the time being slowly worn away by unremitting toil for the barest modicum of food and raiment upon which life can be supported. It is mere thoughtlessness to suppose that you can measure the worth of a man's life to himself by years and months.

(2) Or it may be urged that all but the lowest classes of wage-earners have, after all, a less hard life than that of a free savage or semi-savage. They are sure of a meal, and they can send for the doctor when they are ill! True, but we all know even a hard life is more enjoyable when you are your own master than one of more creature comforts in which you are some one else's slave. It is not because the slave is not fed and doctored that slaves commonly strike for liberty. And when one reflects on the kind of existence to which civilisation has damned our match-makers and pottery-makers, one scarcely feels inclined to excuse the crime because the sufferers are not more numerous. The Spanish girl's apology for her baby is not in place *here*.

(3) The optimist may plead—and support his plea by figures

—that the wage-earners were worse off eighty or a hundred years ago than they are now. I reply: (*a*) At least there was less "phossy jaw" and lead-poisoning. (*b*) Such improvements as have been made have been mainly due not to advance in mere intellectual culture but to the efforts of conscious benevolence, often operating in a way which tends to sacrifice the full culture of the few to the health of the many. Let me take an instance. I suppose we should all consent—if the thing cannot be done otherwise—to safeguard the health of the match-making workers by prohibiting the use of the dangerous yellow phosphorus, even if the cost of matches has to be doubled to the consumer. But a piece of benevolent legislation which compelled the consumer to pay more for the necessaries of life would *eo ipso* diminish the funds he can afford to devote to the pursuits of the higher culture. The diminution in the case suggested would be trivial, but that does not affect the principle.

Hitherto we have been speaking of human "progress" in the most general sense rather than of what would commonly be called specially "moral" progress. We must now ask what it is that is meant by this latter term, and whether it is a final fact of human life. In a sense, no doubt, all human progress might be said to be "moral" progress, inasmuch as all progress means closer approximation to the full realisation of our ideals and anticipations. But what is meant by moral progress is something more than mere complete realisation of *an* ideal. What we mean by moral progress is progress in *morality*, *i.e.* a closer approximation to the realisation of *the* ideal of ethics. That ideal is itself, as we have seen, a compromise, and may be roughly described as the attainment, by each member of the community, of as complete and permanent satisfaction as he can enjoy without interfering with the claims of other members of the community to similar satisfaction. In proportion as the type of character produced by a given body of social institutions is such as to make the achievement of this ideal possible, those institutions may be said, in comparison with others less adapted to this end, to exhibit moral progress.

It becomes clear from this statement that moral progress is as much a thing of a double aspect as the moral ideal.

One society may be said to be morally in advance of another, either because the type of existence it secures to its most highly favoured members is richer in lasting and unconditional satisfactions than are possible under the second social system, or because the average standard of lasting content is higher, though the actual attainments of the most favoured individuals may not be so complete. In practice, I suppose, our judgments about moral progress are based upon a more or less incoherent fusion of both these principles, though it is generally upon the equality of distribution rather than upon the highest level of individual attainment that we lay the chief emphasis.

When we speak of our own current moral practice, as we rightly or wrongly often do, as being in advance of that of the ancient civilised societies of Greece and Rome, we mean not so much that under our own system the best individual characters are greater than the best characters among the men of old, as that the general standard of moral practice is higher. If the few do not rise so high, neither do the many, as we congratulate ourselves, sink so low. Christianity, we commonly believe—and I am not here either supporting or attacking the proposition —Christianity has raised the standard both of self-discipline and of self-sacrifice. The mass of mankind have more definite ideals of self-culture before them than of old, they respect themselves more, their lives are more marked by devotion to purposes more rational than the gratification of bodily lusts; they have, as we say, something to live for. And Christianity has also deepened men's sense of their common membership of one great society, and their common claim upon one another's benevolence and compassion. Hence the standard both of self-realisation and of social justice is higher now than at any previous period of man's history. Men's lives are less aimless, and at the same time less selfish. They have learned at once to have a purpose in life, and not to have purposes which demand the ruthless sacrifice of other lives to personal satisfaction. Thus, says the pulpit, when we compare the old with the modern world, we find evidence of moral progress all along the line.

After what we have said about progress in general, it is obvious that we shall be prepared to find that moral progress

is not effected except at a considerable cost in loss of some kind or other. Still a further question remains to be raised. It were at least conceivable that no specifically *moral* qualities have to be sacrificed to the attainment of moral progress; the world, it may be said, grows from age to age more moral, and the qualities which are gradually eliminated from life in this process are after all only physical. The points in which the fresh unfettered life of the nomad semi-savage has the advantage of the life of our modern centres of thought and industry are not of a moral kind. It is only in physical hardihood, steadiness of hand and nerve, quickness of eye and nose and ear, that the civilised world comes badly out of the comparison. In the moral qualities of self-control, truthfulness, mercy, and the rest, the advantage is on our side. The whole price we have paid for our moral advance has been the loss of qualities that are at best of no moral worth. Hence, it might be argued, though we cannot assert that man's apparent progress has been without its drawbacks, we may say that this apparent *moral* progress has involved no aspect of *moral* retrogression.

Against this view of the case there are, however, the following insuperable objections. (1) It is quite impossible, after the fashion of popular philosophy, to draw a line between qualities that are moral and qualities that are not so. Whatever is felt by men to be *worth* having at all has, *eo ipso*, moral value, or rather, moral value is a tautologous expression, for the morality of a quality simply means its felt value. We have already explained, in our third chapter, that the distinction between moral and physical qualities is simply one of convenience—qualities of temper, taste, and mind generally being called moral qualities, *par excellence*, only because they are more directly and universally of advantage to the community than purely physical qualities. The best proof of the arbitrary nature of the ordinary distinction may be obtained by making the attempt to draw the line in any single case between the merely physical disposition, which is supposed to have no moral value, and its "moral" analogue. When, for instance, does "physical" courage begin to contain an element of moral value? When does physical chastity begin to acquire the worth you suppose to belong only to

moral continence? As Mr. Bradley has well said, if you once deny that such a quality as courage has a moral value in those cases where it appears to be purely "physical," you will find yourself logically driven to deny that it ever has a moral value in any case.[1] Whatever is the object of approbation, has, for us at any rate, moral worth.

(2) And further, we cannot admit that the only or the most important losses of civilisation have been merely physical qualities. Think for a moment impartially of some of the qualities apparently possessed by our semi-civilised forefathers a thousand years ago or more, and now disappearing, one after the other, from our modern civilisation. Some of these qualities you may reasonably say we may suffer to vanish without much lamentation. Compared with ourselves, our ancestors were cruel, hasty, intolerant, selfish. Mercifulness to our enemies, patience with the follies of our friends, tolerance of other men's convictions, regard for their just claims,—all these are among the gains of the English race since the days when it first came over to conquer and plunder in our island. Some of the practices of our fathers, their cuttings of "ernes" upon the bodies of their enemies, their habit of settling a feud by "burning in" a man with all his old folk and womenkind, appear to us now so detestable as to be hardly credible of men from whom we boast ourselves to have derived good part of our best qualities.

Yet our ancestors, at their worst, if we will but recognise it, had the good qualities of their defects. And we, on the other hand, have unmistakably the defects of our good qualities. If they were ruffians, we are fast becoming sentimentalists. Along with the cruelty and turbulence, civilisation threatens to rob us of the courage, the self-reliance, the promptitude in act of the earlier generations. We are less cruel in our enmities, but we make up for the change by a subtler and viler form of cruelty, the mercy that "pardons those that kill." We are less rash in enforcing unreasonable claims; but at the same time we are learning to balance reason against reason, and interest against interest, in a way that in many cases saps the very springs of all resoluteness in act. We are more compassionate, and our

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 437, footnote.

compassion is continually defeating its own objects by expending itself on the scoundrel and the ne'er-do-well. There is a constantly growing and formidable severance among us between the men of action and the men of conscientious principle. Regard for moral principle is more and more tending to degenerate into a scrupulosity that stands aghast at all prompt and vigorous action, and, by a natural reaction, decision and energy, divorced from conscience and principle, are constantly being degraded into a sort of theatrical ruffianism, which makes open mock of all distinctions of right and wrong, honour and dishonour, and thinks every protest against its extravagances amply refuted by a vulgar gibe at the "unctuous rectitude" that shrinks from profitable villainy.

These may sound exaggerated phrases, but I would suggest to any one who objects to them an easy test of their truth. One may, I suppose, gauge the average moral opinion of the community fairly well by a sufficiently extensive examination of the various organs of public opinion on current, social, and political questions. Now I put it to any unbiassed reader, whether it is not the case that the major part of our public press is at this moment so permeated with the dry rot of a silly sentimentalism on the one hand, and the plague of a blatant "Imperialism," that glories in nothing so much as its indifference to every consideration of honour and justice, on the other, that it is all but impossible for a man who is neither a knave nor a fool to sympathise, except by accident, with the utterances of the organs of any of our parties on any social or even political question of moment. These evil qualitites, it may be said, are only ephemeral, but even if that be true of the forms of expression they obtain, it is surely not true of the spirit either of sickly sentimentalism or of swaggering anti-sentimentalism.

Take a further instance of the way in which changes wrought in the form of society cause valuable moral qualities to disappear. No one, I imagine,—at least no one who candidly tries to look facts in the face,—can doubt that in many ways it would be a moral advance if the national jealousies and foolish commercial rivalries which at present endanger the peace of the world were to give place to broader sympathies and a more

rational conception of national interest. In many ways the world would be the better for it, if we could abolish or, at any rate, minimise war. At the same time who can doubt that if reason and humanity ever succeed in making war an impossibility or even a rare contingency, there will disappear along with the need for exposure in the field much of the high heroic fortitude which we now prize as one of the noblest developments of the ethical character?

You say even if there were no wars, there are dangers enough to be faced at home in time of peace,—there is plenty of room in any community where there are firemen and policemen and doctors for the practice of the most heroic fortitude and self-devotion. But benevolent effort is working as hard to diminish the risks of fire and murder and infectious disease as it is to do away with national enmities. Who can doubt that society would gain in moral vigour in some ways by the suppression of crime and disease as well as by the abolition of the follies and jealousies that are the cause of war? Thus the moral improvement of society in one direction would seem to involve as one of its essential conditions the destruction of the conditions which call into being one of our most cherished moral virtues. War and peace have each their own characteristic virtues and their own peculiar vices, and if, as seems the case, the general moral advancement of mankind needs to be furthered by approximation to a continuous state of peace, it is clear that general moral advancement would necessitate the loss of some moral qualities of no slight value.

There is in all this nothing at which we have any reason to be surprised after the results reached in our discussion of the moral ideal. The practicable moral ideal, we said, is essentially a compromise effected for working purposes between two different aspects of the good which are perpetually tending to diverge from one another. We ought therefore to expect that the presence of these imperfectly reconciled tendencies will make itself felt in any account we can frame of moral progress. What, from the point of view of the impartial distribution of satisfactions over the whole social area, is advance, may appear, from the standpoint of highest attainable individual perfection, retrogression and *vice versa*.

As the moral ideal itself is not *eindeutig*,—to use a convenient and scarcely translatable Teutonism,—we can hardly be surprised if the course of moral development should admit of more than one interpretation.

We have reached our present result by a comparison, the lines of which have been barely indicated in what has been written above, between the civilised and the primitive stages of one and the same national history. Similar inferences might have been drawn from a comparison between our own civilisation and those of ancient Greece and Rome. Unequal as are the chances of satisfaction afforded by our modern social institutions to different individuals, they are at any rate less scandalously unequal than was the case under the highest civilisation of the ancient world. The proportion of persons excluded from all chance of participation in the life of culture, high as it is, is at least less among us than in any of the older communities which rested upon an industrial basis of avowed slavery. The very hypocrisy which leads us to deny, until forced into confession, that the thing slavery still exists among us under fairer names, is a sign of our advance, for it shows that we are at least aware of the evil and ashamed of it. If social justice be taken as the basis of a comparison there can be little doubt that we have made, with all our shortcomings, enormous advances upon earlier civilisations.

If the standard of comparison had been rather the completeness and many-sidedness of the fullest individual characters produced by different types of social order, it is not so clear that we could have given judgment in our own favour. With the disappearance of the old societies in which learning and culture had not as yet become professionalised, and in which every man belonging to the upper class or dominant race had lifelong leisure to devote exclusively to intellectual pursuits, there has disappeared irrecoverably something of the grace and charm of that Hellenic culture in which the deepest wisdom was wedded to the utmost felicity of expression and dignity of manner. The works of the wisest and most eloquent of modern sages cannot but appear tainted with the ill-mannered and clumsy professionalism of the sophist when compared with the awful grace of Plato. It is the all but complete absence of all that we understand by this word

"professionalism" from the scientific and the civic life of the better class of Greeks that gives to them as philosophers, as soldiers, and as statesmen, a certain air of combined dignity and frank open-mindedness which we, among whom every considerable pursuit has become for good or bad a *Brodwissenschaft*, can envy but do not know how to reproduce. I need not labour my point any further; the little that has been said may suggest to the reader a more extended train of reflection which will, I think, convince him that such moral "progress" as we have actually made since the days of Plato and Aristotle has been purchased by the sacrifice of qualities which are in themselves of high moral worth.

What is the upshot of all this argumentation? Are we to assert that there is after all no such thing as moral "progress" in the world, but merely changes which bring us neither nearer to nor further from our ideal? Scarcely; for us the fact that the all but unanimous voice of instructed men who have no desire to pose as apologists or as iconoclasts pronounces that the moral tone of society has risen since the days of the Greeks or of our own fathers, is sufficient proof that the progress has been real. Like other questions of mere ethics, the question whether the world has progressed morally during the last three thousand years is one upon which the *orbis terrarum* must be the only and the final judge. But we say, first, moral progress is not an *ultimate* fact; our moral gains, as we can often see in particular cases, have had to be paid for by losses of one kind and another; and next, moral progress is progress towards the realisation of an ideal built on compromise—an ideal that falls to pieces the moment it is subjected to serious and honest philosophical analysis; and therefore what appears as progress, when judged with special reference to one of the materially conflicting aspects of the ideal, may be looked upon as retrogression when estimated with reference to the other.

Do not let us be misunderstood here. As I have said already more than once, on the whole in making the most of your own life you are also doing the best you can for society. The conflicting aspects of the moral ideal are after all outgrowths from the same psychological root of approbation, and arise by divergent evolution from within, not by the

artificial forcing together from without of independent lines of thought and action. So with all moral progress towards the ideal. We may well admit that, on the whole, such a reorganisation of society as increases the pressure upon each individual of the claims of the rest, also increases the opportunities of the *average* individual for making the most of his own gifts and talents. My point is simply that this average gain has been purchased by the loss of certain elements of value from the few supreme products of our social culture. If the average man has more opportunities for making the most of himself in England to-day than he would have had in the Athens of the fourth century B.C., the few supreme individuals have, as far as I can see, rather less. It is scarcely possible for any man under the changed conditions of existence to realise the ideal of high and perfect self-culture as the Platos and Aristotles could. We may well acquiesce in the general judgment of mankind that the price is worth paying, but we should not blind ourselves to the fact that it has been paid.

Of the general character of the relative progress that we admit to have been made by Christian civilisation there is little need to speak here in any detail. The nature of it might indeed easily be inferred from what has been said of the peculiarities of the practical moral ideal. A moral development which arises from the very struggle of mankind to establish a type of society permanently secure, as far as may be, from attacks from without and from dissolution from within, can take but one direction. It must tend directly or indirectly to the creation of institutions under which the opportunities for the conflict between the claims of self-culture and the claims of social justice are increasingly diminished; in this way and in no other can social stability be ensured. And we said in our last chapter that this *is*, on the whole, the course which has been followed by social—and consequently by moral—evolution.

The great ethical instrument of such social advance we know to have been the growth of a feeling of common interests and sympathies among individuals who stood outside the narrow political limits which were in the main set by ancient practice, and to a less extent by ancient

theory, to moral obligation. The foundation of the world-empires of Alexander and Cæsar and the appearance, almost contemporaneously with the empire of the Cæsars, of a Church with a universal mission and a thirst for universal spiritual domination have notoriously been the chief factors in the creation of our modern type of civilisation. Of the two influences that of the universal Church must, on the whole, be regarded as the more abiding and the more potent. Scarcely had the Roman Empire furnished the Church with the necessary machinery for its world-wide task when it began itself to fall to pieces under the pressure of the barbarian inroads from the north and east. Slow as the disintegration of the Imperial system was, it has, one thinks, been by now finally effected. Once more the national has triumphed over the universal and imperialistic ideal of political organisation. If the result has not been the re-establishment of the narrowly national Hellenic conception of moral obligation, we shall not be far wrong in attributing our deliverance from so retrograde a development to the influence of a common Christianity upon peoples who have hardly anything else in common.

Modern humanitarian sentiment is so apt to dwell—and not without reason—upon the bad side of Christian cosmopolitanism, its religious persecutions and wars for a creed, that it is perhaps worth while to point out, what is surely obvious enough, that these hateful phenomena are simply the reverse side of the operation of a beneficial sentiment. Wars between nations of different confessions are, after all, a significant indication of their recognition of interests and ties which are more than merely national. The strife of creeds, with all its abominations, is simply the other side of the humanitarian spirit itself. If there were no wars of religion in the Hellenic world,[1] the cause lay not in any broad spirit of intellectual tolerance, but in the narrowness and exclusiveness of the Greek ethical ideals. It is to the strength of the Christian sentiment of cosmopolitanism that we owe it that the conflict between our patriotic and our humanitarian ideals affords the impartial student of current ethical opinion so striking an illustration of

[1] The "Sacred" wars were, of course, not wars of religion in the modern sense, but wars inspired by local, commercial, and political rivalries.

the internal contradiction and duality which we have found to lie at the very root of morality.[1]

Our reflections upon progress thus lead us inevitably to the conclusion we have already reached in our account of the moral ideal. If progress were found to be a process of continuous approximation to a single coherent and all-embracing social ideal, there would be some case for the view that metaphysics can supply us with an account of that ideal. But if progress towards the realisation of some aspects of the ideal is only to be got by neglecting other aspects, then once more we must claim that the ideal is itself full of contradiction and confusion. If it be true that all moral progress is effected by the loss of qualities of confessed moral value, then once more we have shown that the theories and hypotheses of ethics are a necessarily imperfect and self-contradictory attempt to unite in one consistent system refractory and inconsistent aspects of the world of experienced fact. The point of view of a "pure" experience, from which all this confusion and conflict would be seen to be only apparent, has not been, and cannot be, attained so long as we remain within the limits of the science of ethics.

And the moment we make this admission we are also confessing that we cannot, as moralists, say what or how great modifications of our characteristic point of view would be necessary before the standpoint of "pure" experience could be reached. If all the concepts we have as moralists to operate with—"self," "self-culture," "benevolence," "progress," and the rest—involve the presence of an unknown amount of error, arising from our inability to see the whole facts of existence at once, then ethics, however great its value as a provisional description

[1] It is easy, of course, to deny the existence of a conflict by setting up either "My country, right or wrong!" or "Humanity before my country!" as absolute and unquestionable moral principles. But I do not envy the intellectual condition of any one who is content to accept maxims of this kind without serious misgiving. Of course, it is once more true that *on the whole* you serve the cause of humanity by serving your country's interests, but it seems irrational to deny the possibility of a collision. It is at least barely thinkable that under certain circumstances humanity, as a whole, might visibly stand to gain by the destruction of such an institution as the British Empire. What would be duty of an English citizen in such a case? I at least do not see how to answer the question on theoretical grounds. Practically, I suppose, the course approved by the general conscience would be to do all you can to keep your country from acting "wrongly," but, if you fail, to stand by your country when the crisis comes, "right or wrong," through thick and thin. But, like other practically advisable courses, this is a mere unprincipled compromise.

of facts only partially understood, gives us no finally satisfactory account of anything. It is not in this mass of convenient assumptions which you must not question, and confusions that you must not attempt to clear up, that the speculative intellect can find permanent satisfaction for its demand for an account of facts which shall be all-inclusive and finally free from internal contradiction.

Ethics, in a word, commits both the faults which our first chapter found to be inseparable from merely provisional descriptions of the world; it mutilates the facts it sets itself to describe, and it contradicts itself in its account of them. Nor can you, we must add, get rid of either vice by devotion to the other. If you mutilate the facts still further by ruling out all that will not come under some one aspect of the ideal, such as self-realisation or social service, the remainder will, as we have found, be no less full of contradiction than before. If you resolve to include them all, careless whether or not your account does not assume contradictory principles, you will still find, so long as you do not widen your view till it takes in *all* the facts of human life, and indeed of the world's history, that there are relevant facts you have neglected. And when you do include *all*, your science has ceased to be ethics. You are in the same dilemma which confronts you whenever you try to treat the propositions of any departmental science as absolute philosophical truth. You cannot get a finally coherent account of *any* facts without giving an account of *all* facts, and a science which took account of all facts, if such a science there were, would not give you those particular working hypotheses about the connection of *special* facts which you require for the purposes of practical life. Every departmental science—ethics among the number—is only of value because it is not the whole truth; for any complete account of reality would, in becoming complete, cease to be a mere science about things and become the direct experience of them. As the Alexandrian Platonists knew, it is not by knowledge or science, but in an intuition that is something more and less than knowledge, and cannot be described in language appropriate to our roundabout conceptual modes of experience, that the absolute whole, if apprehended at all, would have to be apprehended.

And ethics is not even metaphysics. For metaphysics, we found, although like all forms of knowledge incapable of giving us the full and final experience of the absolute whole to which we aspire, at least gives us a consistent and coherent account of its formal characteristics, and the confusions and contradictions of ethical theory do not even do so much as that. It is not even the fullest and final expression of our human and defective experience of the side of life it professes to illustrate, as we shall see in a later chapter, when we come to deal with what is commonly called "religion." From beginning to end, its assumptions are arbitrary and conflicting, and its conclusions only satisfying so long as you do not think too closely about them. In Mr. Bradley's terminology, it presents us only with "appearance," not with "reality." Or, to put the same thing in the alternative phraseology of our first chapter, an experience which can be adequately expressed by the concepts and theories of ethics is no "pure" experience, but one riddled through and distorted with symbolic "untruth." No great religion, as Mr. Bradley very aptly reminds us,[1] has ever treated mere morality as in itself the one thing necessary. The reason is not, as superficial critics are fond of informing us, that religion is at heart a mere outgrowth of immoral superstition, so much as that in mere morality there is nothing that can satisfy for any length of time the aspirations of any human heart. When it does not rise into religion morality sinks into a formal and heartless pedantry of legalism, with just enough vitality about it to make its possessor as miserable as he makes every one else.

But I am anticipating unduly the investigations of a later chapter. Let me close the present discussion with a word or two in recapitulation of some of our results. The moral ideal, so far as it is practicable at all, is essentially a compromise. I do not, of course, mean to fall into the error, attributed by Mr. Bradley to popular ethics, of trying to compound a coherent ethical theory by bringing together two supposedly independent ethical ideals into an artificial conjunction. As our third chapter has shown, we are quite at one with him in holding that self-realisation and self-sacrifice are aspects of a single but radically self-contradictory mental process, and that, in the

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 420.

majority of cases, you realise yourself most fully in forgetting self in the discharge of the duties of your station.

The only points in which the view enunciated in this essay seems to me to differ in its main outlines from that expressed in the chapter on "Goodness" in *Appearance and Reality*—a chapter to which I believe myself to owe, directly or indirectly, whatever in this essay is true—are these two: (1) We have perhaps over-emphasised the possibility and even frequency of collisions between the ideal of self-cultivation and that of beneficent self-sacrifice. Mr. Bradley perhaps tends, on the other hand, to treat such collisions as rarer than they really are. In any case, the question of principle is not affected by so minor a difference. It is, of course, practically impossible to exclude the danger of mistaking what may be due to peculiarities of individual temperament for characteristics of human experience in general.[1] (2) With Mr. Bradley the conflicting aspects of the moral ideal are those of self-realisation and self-sacrifice, which, as he explains it, is not necessarily social, but includes what, in our last chapter, we called self-discipline. I have preferred to regard "justice" or "social service" as the opposite side of the antithesis, on the ground that self-discipline and self-sacrifice, to be morally justifiable, must be shown to issue in the realisation of some approved experience either for myself or for others. Egoistic self-discipline thus seems to me to be properly distinguished in ethics from socially beneficent self-sacrifice. Again, self-discipline, I take it, is always approved for its results in seeming satisfactions to some one else, if not to myself. Hence the ends which from time to time come into conflict in the moral life seem best described as those of self-culture and social justice or benevolence. This, again, is properly a merely minor difference. The *fact* that all self-realisation implies self-denial, and that consequently all self-denial is not directly social in its objects, we have, of course, conceded.

To return to our recapitulation of results. From the

[1] Yet how many of us are there who do not sympathise with the spirit of Faust's half-pitying, half-envying address to the self-complacent Wagner:—

"Du bist dir nur des einen Triebs bewusst;
O lerne nie den anderen kennen!
Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust,
Die eine will sich von den anderen trennen," etc.

duality of the moral ideal we found that it follows that morality never quite gives us what we are aiming at, and that the only way to avoid ultimate disappointment, so long as you remain within the categories of the purely ethical consciousness, is to shut your eyes to the inconsistency of your own actions and take special care to see only one side of their results at a time. To live for self-culture in real earnest, we found, is to discover in the end that you have worn yourself out in the pursuit of a chimæra. To devote yourself to disinterested public activity is, if you will look closely, to create suffering as well as to relieve it. To adopt the social code of your class and discharge the duties of your station without questioning is the best way to avoid discontent and failure; but you must, if you resolve on this life of convenient compromise, be prepared to be indifferent to the logical consistency of your conduct.

With these results agreed those of our examination of the nature of moral progress. And the conclusion to be drawn from the whole of the evidence before us is that ethics is a science resting entirely upon a basis of everyday generalisation from experience, that its hypotheses are merely provisional, and that none of its leading concepts will stand the test of thorough metaphysical criticism. Before we go on to complete our argument by a fuller discussion of certain ultimate ethical dilemmas and their disappearance in the religious experience, we shall, in the chapter which immediately follows, turn aside to consider certain minor but not unimportant developments of ethical theory. Chap. vi. will deal with the ethical significance of pleasure and its relation to duty.

Supplementary Note to Chapter Five—On the Principle of Sufficient Reason

I do not propose, in the following remarks, to write a complete metaphysical essay upon the meaning of causation, but only to make the position adopted in the text a little clearer. For a fuller discussion of the problem I may refer to the chapters on "Motion" and on "Causation" in *Appearance and Reality*, and also to

the sixth chapter of *Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft*, by H. Cornelius, a work to which I have had more than once to confess myself indebted. The object of the account I now subjoin is simply to exhibit my own position by contrast with two opposing errors—the mistake which takes causality for an ultimate metaphysical principle, and that which sets it aside altogether on occasion in the interests of "spontaneity" or "free will." For convenience' sake I number the propositions which I desire to advance upon the subject.

(1) Causality, as popularly understood, has no place in any science that understands its business. What seems to be popularly meant by a "cause"? Not a mere "unconditional antecedent." For popular philosophy has always been inexplicably angry at the suggestion that causation can be resolved into mere succession. The popular idea seems to be that there is a something, vaguely designated as "force" or "activity," in the cause which "makes" the effect come into being. When we ask for an example of this "activity" popular philosophy sends us to our own kinæsthetic sensations, sometimes asserting that the feeling of "effort" is the activity in question, sometimes merely declaring that we are conscious of activity, without further description of the alleged mode of consciousness. Such an account of causation is, for more reasons than one, worse than useless. For (*a*) science requires a concept of causal relation which can be applied indiscriminately to the changes in the organic and in the inorganic world. We should have no right to apply to the inanimate world a concept which could only be regarded as valid, if the feeling of effort be supposed also to exist in the inorganic world, and (*b*), as Hume long ago showed, there is no direct experience of "activity."[1] In our own voluntary movements, as elsewhere, all that psychological analysis reveals is sequence of kinæsthetic sensations upon previous ideas or perceptions of the special sense. Introspection discovers no tie of the kind popularly meant by a "cause," connecting ideas with kinæsthetic sensation. As for the feeling of "effort," it can easily be seen to be not the consciousness of causality, but a conscious effect of attempted voluntary movement under certain special conditions. As scientific reasoners, whose object it is to free our concepts of any unintelligible and superflous elements to which no experience corresponds, we must therefore purify our theories of causation from all implications of mysterious activity. Like "force" and "energy," "cause" must mean something which can be stated in terms of experienced succession, or it must mean nothing.

[1] Hume's contention is not, so far as I can see, refuted by pointing out that the one feature which *does* discriminate the relation of cause and effect from that of mere sequence, its continuousness, is certainly learnt from experience of our own movements.

(2) For science causation means *continuous* change or sequence under definite conditions. Each of the sciences which deal with questions of causation is contented when it has succeeded in assigning a number of definite conditions under which a given change will regularly be found to occur, and without which it will not take place. Of the supposed "mysterious tie" of causality, as believed in by the vulgar and philosophers who write for the vulgar, science knows nothing. Its problem, in the search for cause, is always that formulated by Bacon, to find for each "nature" or peculiar form of happening [1] some condition or set of conditions such that when the conditions are present the given "nature" is also infallibly present, and not otherwise (*Nov. Org.* ii. 4).

In passing, one may remark that these statements are not affected by the supposed Plurality of Causes. Strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as the Plurality of Causes, and the belief in it arises merely from intellectual incompetence or haste. Wherever it is alleged that two events which are precisely alike have had different causes, you will find on examination that part of the events has been tacitly overlooked. It is said, for instance, that death may be caused either by a gunshot or by drowning; but it is forgotten that death *plus* a hole in the body with a bullet at the bottom of it is not brought about by drowning, nor death from asphyxiation accompanied with the filling of the lungs with water by shooting. If men really believed in the so-called "Plurality of Causes" in the case of the event death, they would hardly hold inquests upon bodies found dead, and the considerations which apply in this case apply in all. To believe seriously in the Plurality of Causes would be to believe in differences which make no difference, in conditions which condition nothing.

True, the presence or absence of some circumstance may seem to make no perceptible difference to the particular "effect" we may be studying, but then it must never be forgotten that there are no isolated effects. The complete "effect" or "event" at any moment is the whole condition of the universe. You have only to take a more extensive view of the circumstance to find that no condition or antecedent is merely ornamental or idle; each influences the course of what happens in some direction, if not in the particular direction with which you happen to be concerning yourself. Hence science never feels that her causal explanations are satisfactory so long as they leave open to the inquirer a choice among a "Plurality of Causes" for the event in which he is interested. The aim of all science is, in cases of such apparent "plurality," to discover still more remote conditions which determine when an "effect" is produced in one

[1] This is an ugly-looking word, but it seems the most convenient translation of γένεσις or *Geschehen*, and I therefore occasionally avail myself of it.

and when in another of the various conceivable ways. Until the search for cause has become a search for the "Sufficient Reason" or "Totality of the Conditions" of an event, it is not strictly scientific in character.

(3) The *Sufficient Reason* or *Totality of Conditions* is, however, never to be ultimately found. The ideal of scientific explanation, we can easily see, is at once natural and self-contradictory. The object of "explanation" is to fill up the gaps in our experience by connecting one experience with another by the simplest and most coherent assumptions. The ideal of this process would be the reduction of the whole course of the world-process into a single perfectly coherent system, and it is precisely this reduction of all that happens to system that science attempts in its search for causes or reasons. But the ultimate completion of this search for reasons, if it could be attained, would be self-destructive. For until your "antecedent" and "consequent" are each of them widened to take in the whole contents of the universe you have not got either the *whole* effect or the "Totality of Conditions" demanded by the scientific ideal of explanation.

So long, for instance, as *any* circumstance in the universe is left out of consideration in your statement of the conditions of an event, your enumeration is incomplete, and you cannot with certainty say that any variation in the disregarded or unknown conditions might not affect the event to be explained. In practice, of course, you can appeal to your past success in deducing from your assumptions results according with the observed course of events as a proof that the particular "effects" you are studying are independent of variations in other conditions than those you have already taken into account; but no amount of past successful deduction will warrant you in asserting that your calculations may not at any moment be upset by some change in circumstances hitherto unregarded or undiscovered. You have not really ascertained the true "sufficient" reason or given the true explanation until both "conditions" and "event" are made to include everything in the universe. And when they are thus made all-inclusive the possibility of explanation vanishes.[1] As soon as conditions and event are alike widened to include everything, they become identical. The "conditions" are now the whole contents of the universe, and the resultant event is the same.

[1] Strictly speaking, "totality of conditions" is a doubly contradictory phrase, For (1) as soon as the "conditions" are completely stated, they are the event and are no longer properly conditions at all. And (2) they are not a "totality" of independent realities which you can add together, but a single all-embracing fact. Mill's language about the "sum" of conditions always provokes one to ask—What is *one* condition? But though logically doubly inaccurate the phrase has its practical convenience, and I do not hesitate to use it, subject to the considerations mentioned in this note.

Or, to put the same thing in another way, you regard one event A as the *explanation* of another event B because the general scheme of the universe is, in your opinion, so constructed that A and B are always conjoined. Unless both A and B are equivalent to the whole contents of the universe, the statement, as we have seen, can never be made with full confidence; as soon as A and B get this meaning, the statement becomes a piece of unmeaning tautology. You cannot with any sense assert that the fact that the whole contents of the universe are at one moment A and the next B is *explained* by the general construction of the universe, for the fact and the explanation are clearly identical. Only connection of part with part can be *explained* by exhibiting the common connection of both parts with a wider whole; the behaviour of a whole which has nothing outside it is, from the nature of the case, incapable of explanation.

Two alternatives are thus left to us. We see that explanation is (*a*) always imperfect, and (*b*) has its limits. You can never completely explain *anything*, and there is no sense in asking for an explanation of *everything*. With regard to the successive states of the universe *as a whole* we may take one of two lines. (1) We may say that the universe is in a condition of "absolute," *i.e.* of causeless, becoming. It is now A, again B, and yet again C, but there is *no* reason for the succession—it simply happens so. In other words, we may set up *chance* or *fate* (for both are names for the same "absolute" becoming) as the last word about the universe. And to this deification of chance or fate every philosophy which regards change and time as fully real, *i.e.* as characteristics of the whole universe as a whole, must in the end come, however it may disguise the result from itself by talk of spontaneity or freedom or the movement of the notion, or what not. Yet it must surely be manifest that this view, call it by what name you will, is fundamentally self-contradictory. When you say, the whole is in a process of constant becoming in virtue of which it is now A, now B, now C, you seem to be asserting that what is A is the same as B and as C, and yet somehow A, B, C are not the same, but are different. And this seems quite irrational and unintelligible.

It is true that in any partial process of change within the whole we have to make just this assertion, that what seems different, and therefore up to a certain point *is* different, is yet the same. But in the case of any partial process we can justify our statement by explanations the gist of which is always that, if you take the right and scientific point of view, you will find the difference disappearing. *E.g.*, there has been a redistribution of the energy of a material system among its component parts, and this makes it appear different from what it was before; but the total energy of the system and its relation to other systems has not altered, and

hence it is seen to be the *same* system as before, if you take the appropriate point of view. But how to find the point of view from which a whole standing in no relations to anything outside itself can be seen to be the same whole, though it appears now as A, now as B?[1] The problem is insoluble; to solve it would really necessitate the discovery of a second and still wider whole, to which the universe in state B still retained the relations it had enjoyed in state A. And with regard to this second universe the same problem would arise, and so on *ad infinitum*. There is thus no sense in the statement that one and the same all-inclusive whole can now *as a whole* be in one state and again *as a whole* in another.

The logical consequence of belief in the doctrine of the "absolutes Werden" would be the denial of all self-sameness and identity. You would have to say, there is not really a *whole* at all, but only disconnected and utterly disparate successive states which are states of nothing. There is A, and then there is B, and then C, but nothing which is successively Xa, Xb, Xc. And thus with identity, becoming itself would disappear. The "absolutes Werden" would not even *be* a "Werden," for there would be nothing to *become*. There would not even, properly speaking, be succession, for if any one of the disparates A, B, C be supposed to exist over a finite duration, the old problem about change would break out within that period. For if A at the beginning of the period were exactly what it is at the end, it is hard to see what is meant by saying that the beginning of the period differs from the

[1] I suppose that it is just possible that to some minds the problem may appear to be solved by the physical doctrine of the *Conservation of Energy*. The identity between state A and state B of the whole might be said to lie in the fact that the total energy of the system remains unaffected, though its distribution over the component partial systems is different in the two states. We have ourselves invoked this principle to account for the identity, under all appearance of transformation, of a partial system which retains identical relations to others. But it seems inapplicable to the universe considered as a single all-containing system. For the justification of our assertion that the partial system remained the same so long as its total energy was not diminished nor increased was found in the permanence of its relations to other partial systems. But in the case of the *whole* there is nothing to which it stands in permanently identical relations under its various transformations. Is it more reasonable to say that A has *become* B, simply because the energy of the two systems is the same, than it would be to say that a shilling has *become* a mark because the purchasing power of both is equal? Becoming seems unmeaning except where you have a system which, while changing, retains permanent relations to something else.

I do not here raise the question, which would need discussion in a set treatise on metaphysics, whether there is ultimately any meaning in calling the whole universe a conservative material system. If the reader will reflect upon the criticism of Stallo, *Concepts of Modern Physics*, p. 276; Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, foot-note on p. 331 (ed. 1); and Lotze, *Metaphysic*, p. 209 *ff.*, he will, I think, have little difficulty in coming to his own conclusion on the subject. I need hardly say that I am not to be understood as endorsing all the views expressed in these passages, although the general argument in them all appears to me unanswerable. I do not, for instance, feel sure what is meant by the "actual motion" spoken of by Mr. Bradley, nor how it is supposed to be measured. To bring his statement into agreement with physical science, "actual motion" must be measured by the product of the mass of a body into its velocity with reference to a standard direction. *Cf.* Stallo, pp. 70-75.

end; succession would be reduced to a difference which is *no* difference. And if A begins, let us say, by being A_1 and ends as A_2, we have once more to ask how, on your principles, A_1 and A_2 can both be A. Thus the doctrine which begins by assuming that change, succession, and becoming are real characteristics of the whole as it would appear to a "pure" experience, ends by contradicting itself on every one of these points. It says, there is a change without anything that changes, becoming without anything that becomes, succession of indivisible and unextended moments.

We seem thus driven to the view (2) that change and becoming are characteristics not of the whole, but only of its subordinate parts considered in relation to other parts. If we could grasp the full nature of all reality in an individual experience, we should be able to see how, what appears as change when one partial system is compared with another is, when the whole is seen at once, self-identity and self-maintenance, much in the same way as we can even now see that the various internal changes of the subordinate partial systems do not affect their identity, as shown in the permanence of their relations to still partial but wider systems. The doctrine that change and becoming are merely relative is thus seen to be only the logical extension of the process which is going on wherever science of any kind shows us permanency of laws, and the relations expressed by them, in what to the unscientific eye appears constant alteration. According to this, which seems the only intelligible theory, change and becoming would be merely what Herbart would call "partial" or "accidental" aspects of reality—appearances which all growth of scientific insight minimises, and which would vanish altogether if once we could take in the whole contents of reality in a single comprehensive experience.

It is true that on this theory, no less than on the theory of "absolute becoming," we are forced to maintain that time, becoming, and change are mere appearances, or, if you will, illusions; but we can now hold this view, which is after all that of the Christian religion, without having to contradict our own original assumptions. Nor are its intellectual difficulties really as great as they appear. If we will reflect upon the way in which short processes, which can in memory be analysed into an indefinite succession of positions, appear in our direct experience of motion as continuously filling a sensible present,[1] we shall at least be able to imagine an experience to which the whole course of the world's history from first to last may be continuously present as a single self-

[1] On this point I may give a reference to the latest treatment of the problem known to me—that of H. Cornelius in *Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft*, pp. 128-143. Cornelius's instance of the immediate perception of the sound of a short word, in which direct experience detects no succession of the component partial sounds, seems to me singularly happy.

identical whole. To such an experience there would be no more change or succession about the formation and decay of our solar system, than there is to our own immediate experience about the most momentary lightning flash. In this way we may come to see how becoming, change, time, are mere *entia rationis* which only exist for us because the major part of the facts of the universe are not for us matter of direct experience, but have to be reasoned to and inferred.

These views are not in themselves novel, and we have only gone into the matter at such lengths for the sake of one or two applications of them to the problem of moral progress, which we will now proceed to make. Clearly, if all becoming is self-contradictory appearance, and therefore not an ultimate predicate of the metaphysically real, progress of any kind is not an ultimate fact. The universe as a whole, the Absolute, God, or whatever else you prefer to call the ultimate reality with which we come into imperfect contact in our fragmentary experience, cannot develop or progress. And clearly, again, moral progress can form no exception to the general truth that all change only exists for an experience that looks at a part of the whole from a standpoint that does not permit of its full relations with other parts being discerned. Like other change, moral progress is an "accidental aspect" of a reality which, if we could see it steadily and all at once, neither goes backward nor forward.

It is childish to think that by showing that all "explanation" has limits, you can prove the existence of free-will as absolute spontaneity in the moral world. The limits of explicability created by the purely relative nature of change and becoming are the same for all subjects and series of events; at the point where the causal series widens to take in the *whole* conditions or the whole effect, explanation vanishes, or rather, *would* vanish, if the totality of conditions could ever be reached, in direct intuitive experience. But the theory of Free Will — unless you push it to the length of asserting that all the events in the universe are the products of free volition—tries to cut the process of explanation short in a certain special case, while retaining it as valid in all others. It says, You may ask for the conditions of an ordinary event in nature, and again, for the conditions of those conditions, and so on, till you reach the point at which the process of connecting each event with an ever-widening system of events abolishes itself by taking in the whole contents of the universe. But in the special case of human actions you are arbitrarily told to stop short after the first step of the explaining process, and inquire no further. You may ask what are the conditions of the act taking place; but when these conditions have been enumerated, and among them the previous presence

of a "resolution" to act in that particular way, you must not go on to ask what were the conditions of the resolution.

It is clear that this arbitrary way of dealing with one class of happenings cannot be defended by an appeal to the ultimate inexplicability of everything. That doctrine, properly understood, applies to all happenings, and therefore cannot justly be made a basis for the differential treatment of one special class. It asserts that if you go on long enough, and are thorough enough with the principle of explaining everything by reference to its conditions, you will ultimately come to something which cannot be "explained" by reference to conditions; it does not warrant you in refusing to apply the principle to a certain class of facts which stand, so far as the logical principle of sufficient reason is concerned, on precisely the same footing as all others.

Nor will you mend the matter if you take the bull boldly by the horns and declare that *all* the events of the universe are the outcome of spontaneous free will. For (1) your assertion, though of course it cannot be refuted, remains without the shadow of a proof. To show, as we admit that you can, that the ultimately real is uncaused, and that all causation is appearance which philosophic reflection speedily proves to be not ultimate, is by no means the same thing as to prove that all happenings are caused by volition. The real inference from the final unsatisfactoriness of explanation by reference to conditions, is not that free will is the cause of everything, but that all theories, including those about free will, which retain causation as an ultimate category, are metaphysically false. You cannot, if you have any care for coherency in your utterances, assert in one breath that nothing is finally explicable, and in the next, that the explanation of everything is to be sought in the free will of a deity or a number of deities. And (2) the more convincingly you were to prove that everything is brought about by free will, the less rational would it be to make a distinction between the consequences of human volition and other events, with respect to the repeated applicability to them of the principle of sufficient reason. These few remarks may perhaps be useful as indicating with sufficient precision our attitude to the attempts—not without their popularity among us—to rehabilitate the discredited doctrine of Free Will by appeals to Epistemology.

CHAPTER VI

PLEASURE, DUTY, AND THE GOOD

ἔτι οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἕτερόν τι εἶναι βέλτιον τῆς ἡδονῆς, ὥσπερ τινές φασι τὸ τέλος τῆς γενέσεως· οὐ γὰρ γενέσεις εἰσὶν οὐδὲ μετὰ γενέσεως πᾶσαι, ἀλλ' ἐνέργειαι καὶ τέλος.

ARISTOTLE.

No account of the phenomena of the moral life would be complete without some discussion of the rival theories which profess to find a simple key to the problems which we have pronounced insoluble in the respective conceptions of pleasure and of duty, or the "good will" as the sole ultimate good. For us those theories have a certain special importance because, if either of them could be shown to be tenable, our main position would have been adroitly turned. The object of all our argumentation has been to show that Mr. Bradley is right in maintaining that there are two distinct types of moral "goodness,"—the type which culminates in complete self-realisation and the type which, on our view, is most definitely seen in social justice. But if either "pleasure" or a "good will" can be shown to be the one and only good, then all our arguments will be refuted by facts, and our labour in supporting them useless. We will, therefore, consider what can be said for or against the view that the morally good and worthy is (*a*) pleasure, or (*b*) a "good will." If I am not mistaken, the result of the inquiry will be to confirm us in our general line of thought, though I hope to show that, with certain modifications, the doctrine that the pleasant is the good may be accepted, in spite of some current objections of considerable weight.

Pleasure and the Good.—I have already called the reader's

attention to the very important distinction between psychological and purely ethical Hedonism, but for completeness' sake I will repeat rather more fully what was hinted in chap. iii. According to the doctrine of psychological Hedonism, which may be regarded as philosophically dead of the wounds it has received from Prof. Green and Mr. Bradley, not to name other antagonists, but still seems to survive, like "Arthur who will never die," in our popular ethics, the only thing you ever do or ever could desire is pleasure, or more definitely "pleasurable emotion." The object of every act is to get the maximum pleasure possible under the circumstances, and the abiding purpose of every life to get the biggest possible sum of pleasure. To refute at length this theory of conduct would be to take up the reader's time unnecessarily with the repetition of arguments which the reader, if he is not yet familiar with them, may find stated at length and with a power to which we can make no pretence in Mr. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, and even, if the truth must be told, in the *Gorgia* and *Philebus*. We shall therefore take the liberty of assuming that the theory we call "psychological" Hedonism only survives through a misapprehension, and shall refer the reader who is desirous for a full statement of the arguments we believe fatal to it to *Ethical Studies*, Essay III., and the chapter on "Goodness" in *Appearance and Reality*, with a further recommendation to study also the two Platonic dialogues we have already mentioned. We may, however, for the sake of clearing the way for what is to follow, just indicate as briefly as we can the nature of the chief considerations which we regard as fatal to a psychological Hedonism.

These specially conclusive arguments are three in number, and they are these: (1) It is not *pleasure* but some experience which is logically at least distinct from pleasure that we desire. In many cases the experience desired may not even be experience of my own at all. *E.g.*, I may desire certain experiences for my children or for mankind without expecting to share in them. Even the voluptuary seems to desire not the pleasure of drinking or of the table, but the sensation of eating or drinking. It is in the main because he desires the taste, odour, etc. of his glass of wine that it is pleasant to him to drink it. It may be doubted whether the desire of pleasure,

as distinct from the desire of the pleasant experience, is not a psychological impossibility. We might say of it, as Mr. Bradley says of the fear of death, that it only exists incidentally or through an illusion (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 502). At least, it is certain that the only way to get pleasure is not to desire it.

(2) The theory gives no intelligible account of acts of which the purpose is to escape from unpleasant experiences. It is preposterous to say that a starving man desires food for the sake of the pleasure of eating, or a sick man health for the pleasure of convalescence. The desire to escape present uneasiness can by no conceivable juggling with words be made identical with a desire for future pleasure.

(3) And, as far at least as "intensity" of pleasure is supposed to be in itself desirable, the precept to desire pleasure seems to contain a gross psychological impossibility. For, as Plato long ago argued, intense pleasure is scarcely to be had except at the cost of intense pain. To enjoy to the full the pleasure of feeding you must first half starve yourself, to appreciate the pleasure of health you must be ill, and so on. Hence you could not—as the theory seems to imply—desire supremely intense pleasure without indirectly desiring intense pain, and the desire of intense pain seems a strange phenomenon on any theory, most of all on that which begins by asserting that we can desire nothing but pleasure.

Take a concrete example of a rather less elementary kind than those quoted from Plato. When Tristan and Isolde, after drinking the love-drink, fall into each other's arms, they presumably experience a degree of pleasurable emotion scarcely conceivable to persons who live hum-drum lives like our own. But the intensity of the pleasure depends on the fact that it is a recoil from an equally intense state of internal discord and world-weariness. Could we directly desire Tristan's pleasure, with the knowledge of the cost at which it has been purchased, and the inevitable reaction which must follow it when he realises the trick Brangäne has played him? I should be prepared myself, I think, to answer the question of principle in the affirmative. You can, I conceive, desire a particular experience so vehemently as to be willing to purchase it at the cost of a lifetime of

suffering. But I do not see how psychological Hedonism would work the sum by which, on that theory, such a choice must be justified.

Incidentally I may take this opportunity to call attention to some difficulties which are too commonly overlooked by moralists, who talk freely of computing the value of "lots" of pleasure and pain.

(1) Can we assume, as most Hedonists assume without more ado, that pleasure and pain may, for ethical purposes and as determinants of our choice, be regarded as positive and negative degrees on the same scale? *I.e.*, Is a life marked by an alternation of great pleasures and equally great pains obviously on the same level as regards choiceworthiness, as a life of mere absence of emotion of either kind? Most men would, I believe, reject the suggestion without hesitation, though, on the hypothesis of psychological Hedonism, it should only need stating to meet with universal acceptance.

(2) Worse still, on what grounds can we decide between intensity and duration as the basis of our estimate of pleasures? The ordinary Hedonist quietly assumes as self-evident that you can reach the true measure of a pleasure by multiplying its intensity into its duration. But this is, I fear, little better than nonsense. No prolongation or repetition of the ordinary lukewarm pleasures of routine existence will give you the thrill that belongs to the few exceptional moments of glorious and crowded life. How long must I sit over my dinner, or how many dinners must I eat in order to get a "quantity of pleasure" equivalent to that of winning a victory or a great professional or commercial success? Must we not say that the phrase "quantity of pleasure" is at bottom scarcely intelligible? You may arrange pleasures in a rough sort of scale with reference to their intensity, or again with reference to their durability, but there seems to be no way of combining the two calculations so as to get a single result. I regret that I cannot go more thoroughly into this question here.

To these arguments, which, taken together, seem to afford a complete refutation to the theory, we may add the consideration already dwelt upon in chap. iii., that psychological Hedonism seems to owe its very being to the mere blunder

of confusing the present pleasure or pain of an anticipation with the as yet non-existent pleasure or pain with which the realisation of the anticipation will be accompanied. I have enumerated the arguments which seem to me to be the really decisive ones, in order to point out to the reader that they are all of a psychological kind, and are conceived with the question of empirical fact, What *is desired?*

The reader of anti-Hedonist literature, especially of the works of those English philosophers who have been specially influenced by Hegelianism, will no doubt miss from my list certain contentions of a metaphysical nature with regard to the question what is *desirable,* which he has perhaps been in the habit of thinking more conclusive than any arguments from psychological facts. I have, however, omitted these metaphysical contentions purposely; for if our previous conclusions have been established, it should be clear that no theory of the practical ideal of good can be dismissed simply on the ground of its metaphysical unsatisfactoriness. We have seen already that there can be no satisfactory account of the moral ideal, and that no moral ideal is ever fully realised. Hence I cannot regard it as a valid argument against Hedonism that its ideal—"the maximum of pleasurable feeling"—is by definition unattainable, self-contradictory, and a mere *ens rationis.* The same is equally true of every rival theory of the ideal. If you can never really get the "maximum of pleasure," neither can you ever, for instance, consistently and completely realise yourself.[1] If it is true to say of happiness defined in the Hedonist fashion that it is either something you have always got or something you have never got, the same is true of the Anglo-Hegelian ideal of individual perfection. In one sense you always are, in another sense you never will be, the "self" you are told to make real. And when I am told that human desire, because the desire of a "self" is never for mere pleasure, but for "pleasure determined" by reference to the concept of "self" as a permanent "subject to be pleased," I reply that if this means anything more than that it is not mere pleasure, but

[1] Popular moral philosophy of the semi-theological type has even gone so far as to make it one of the chief merits of the "Christian" ideal, as opposed to the Hellenic, that it cannot be realised. We shall have more to say on this topic in chap. vii.

the realisation of an anticipation that satisfies us, it involves the ascription to all human beings of a highly developed egoism which is scarcely to be found outside the small circle of enlightened followers after self-culture, who always form the minority in even the most civilised society.

Nor does the argument that the "greatest sum of pleasure" must be a fiction, because pleasures are momentary and each over before the next begins, seem particularly valuable. For it is really as untrue to speak of pleasure as a mere momentary state as it would be to say the same of sensation. Just as our intellectual life is a continuum, so is our emotional life. It is only in consequence of a false hypostatisation of the results of psychological analysis that either has been taken to be a mosaic built up out of disconnected units of sensation or feeling. The single momentary pleasure is as much a metaphysical fiction as the single momentary sensation. Emotion as actually experienced is always continuous, and each of its phases has a sensible duration. It is only by abstraction from the full facts of life that we come to speak of such a thing as an "isolated" state of feeling discontinuous with what has gone before and will come after.

We have, in fact, in the psychological assumption, which was common to the older Hedonists with their opponents, another example of the same mistake which is constantly committed when an experience is confused with the parts into which it can be analysed by subsequent reflection. It no more follows from the possibility of analysing the emotional continuum into logically distinguishable moments, that pleasures as actually experienced are a succession of fleeting states, each of which is over before the next begins, than it follows from the possibility of representing motion as the successive occupation of an infinity of different positions, that our experience of motion is an experience of a number of discontinuous positions. If the Hedonists had not themselves set the example of making this elementary mistake, they might, as it seems to me, have retorted on their opponents with considerable effect that though pleasures cannot literally be summed, yet the total effect of a life of pleasurably-toned experience is very different from that of a life of painful experiences.

To take a simple instance. The pleasure which a healthy man derives from eating his dinner to-day cannot properly be added to the pleasure he will feel in doing the same thing once again to-morrow, but the two are nevertheless not really discontinuous. The due satisfaction of hunger and regular discharge of the functions of digestion give a continuous pleasurable tone to the organic sensations, and thus affects not mere isolated moments but the whole of experience. The Hedonists were, however, as a body, too intent on the more "violent" pleasures, which cannot be enjoyed except at the cost of emotional reaction, to perceive the force of this rejoinder,[1] which would naturally be made to modern anti-Hedonists by a disciple of Plato. I have called attention to this point because, as we shall see directly, some of these metaphysical objections might be urged against the ethical Hedonism which we have yet to consider, as well as against psychological Hedonism. It is therefore only fair to point out that the reasons which are fatal to psychological Hedonism are of a psychological character, and are not all applicable to merely ethical Hedonism.

By "ethical" Hedonism I understand the doctrine which, without falling into the mistake of regarding pleasure as the object of desire, maintains simply that pleasurableness is so essential a characteristic of the morally good or worthy that we may practically take the pleasantness of an action or a course

[1] The principle of this Anti-Hedonist argument is a mathematical one, and pressed to its logical conclusion would apparently abolish the Integral Calculus along with the Hedonist ethics. For the principle is simply that whatever can, for a particular purpose, be represented as the sum of a number of infinitesimals must be itself infinitesimal. All that it really proves is that an integral is not the sum of an infinite series of infinitesimals in the same sense in which it is the sum of a finite series of finite quantities.

I do not deal in the text with the well-known practical objection against Hedonism, that it opens the way for practical disregard of ordinary moral rules, because the objection seems to me to be equally valid against *any* attempt to translate ethical theory consistently into action. It was urged in *Ethical Studies*, p. 99, (1), that, while the collisions which arise on other moral theories are collisions between different moral ends, those provoked by Hedonism are conflicts between "diverse reflective calculations as to the means to a given moral end;" and (2) that Hedonism—as distinguished from other theories—provokes these collisions, "on well-nigh every point of conduct, and this not merely theoretically, but with a view to one's own immediate practice." But I am not sure that collisions, "with a view to immediate practice" would not be equally common, on any other one-sided theory of the "good," if you really tried to carry it out regardless of the consequences. The worst that can fairly be said against Hedonism on this score would be that, more than other theories, it has a delusive appearance of being capable of direct translation into action.

And I am not quite clear as to the accuracy of the other statement. Do not

of life as a test of its goodness. According to this view, you do not indeed desire pleasure as such, but you do always desire pleasant experiences. For, it is said, it is only because certain types of experience have been found pleasant that we have come to desire them,—only because others have been found painful that we have come to avoid them. If, on the whole, we desire the type of life which exhibits the moral virtues, it is because that type of life is certified by experience to be the pleasantest, and if, on the whole, we disapprove of vice it is because vice is in the end unpleasant. Frequently this line of argument is reinforced by appeals to biology. In any species which is to maintain itself permanently in existence, we are told, the acts which are favourable to the continuance of life must be pleasant, and those which are unfavourable painful. In desiring the pleasant we are desiring to have life and to have it more abundantly; to desire anything else would be to desire death and the disappearance—as far as we are concerned—of the species.

Hence, if moral institutions make, as the history of mankind testifies that they do, for the increase of vital efficiency in the community, morality must clearly, because life-giving, be pleasant. And conversely, what is pleasant must be salutary and life-giving, and therefore morally good. What is painful must coincide with the unwholesome and hostile to

conflicts between "diverse reflective calculations as to the means to a given moral end" occur, for instance, on the theory that the end is self-realisation or the promotion of a certain type of social organisation, if only you take your theory in earnest? The disadvantage of Hedonism seems to me to be simply that it is less obviously a matter of theory than self-realisation or altruism. Any one can see that you would speedily get into inextricable confusions in practice if you insisted on going back to the principle of self-realisation and working out deductions from it instead of taking the social order as an established fact, but it is not so easy to see that the same is true of the Hedonist principle. If the self-realiser were as anxious as he supposes the Hedonist to be to make his practice conform to his theory, would he not find himself involved in just the same difficulties? Though, no doubt, when Hedonism pretends to afford a basis for *exact mathematical calculation* of the relative pleasurableness of different courses of action, it does lay itself open to this charge of raising insoluble questions and provoking unceasing collisions between the various means to its own ends. But I do not see that a sober ethical Hedonism is called upon to make any such pretence to an impossible exactitude.

I may add that the real defect of Hedonist theories, which Professor Green and his followers appear to be inaccurately describing when they dwell on the impossibility of adding pleasures together, seems to me to lie in the failure to distinguish between progressive and non-progressive satisfaction of desire. It is not a mere succession of satisfactions, but a succession of satisfactions in which a permanent want finds an ever-widening realisation along the same lines, that we really need to make us contented. A mere series of satisfactions bound together by no unity of aim and marked by no progress would hardly be finally satisfactory to any one.

life, and must therefore be morally bad. Pleasure can only be bad incidentally when it arises during the earlier stages of a process which in its later stages turns out to be hostile to life, and therefore painful; pain can only be good incidentally when, by acting as a warning from some unwholesome course of action, it diverts our energies into a salutary and therefore pleasant channel. Bearing in mind then that, on these grounds, a lesser degree of pain may be justifiably incurred for the sake of a greater pleasure, and a slight pleasure avoided because it cannot be had without the subsequent experience of a greater pain, the pleasantness of anything may be taken as a sign of its goodness; and although we may not say "the good is pleasure," we may and must say "the good is the pleasant" and "the pleasant is the good." In one shape or another this doctrine is widely held, especially by those who approach morality from the side of biology, and we therefore propose to discuss its merits and defects in some little detail.

We remark, to begin with, that in its complete form it involves the making of two assertions, one of which is the simple converse of the other. If pleasantness may be taken as a test of moral goodness we must be able to say not only "the good is always pleasant," but also, "the pleasant is always good." Now it is at least conceivable that one of these propositions might be true while the other was false. We must therefore examine each on its own merits, and we will begin with that which it seems easiest to dispose of. Is it true that whatever is pleasant is morally good? We have already, by implication, answered this question in the negative when in chap. iii. we made the essence of the "good" to be the fulfilment of a pleasurable anticipation. According to the view there taken, "this is good," the judgment of approbation, regularly implies the realisation of a previously entertained idea in experiences of a sensational and perceptional type. We are therefore constrained to say that when a pleasurable experience occurs without the previous existence of ideas or anticipation which it in some ways realises or fulfils, the pleasant experience cannot properly be called good. It becomes "good" for us only because it is in some sense or other the passage into fact of a pleasurably-toned anticipation. As we have already said, where there are no "ideas" and anticipa-

tions to be realised, it is only improperly that we can speak of experiences as having varying "values." I do not, of course, mean that an experience is not "good" or "valuable" unless it corresponds exactly to a previous anticipation, but I do mean that neither worth nor goodness can properly be ascribed to it unless it is felt to be the realisation, in however unexpected a way, of some previously formed idea, the satisfaction of some previously experienced craving.[1]

On this point, then, we are entirely in accord with the weighty words of Mr. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*. Pleasant experiences which do not owe their pleasantness to their relation to a previous anticipation are not, properly speaking, good or worthy, and their frequency in a given life is no measure of its moral excellence. A man is not morally good because his career has been marked by extraordinary instances of unexpected good luck, nor is the life of one of the lower animals to be reckoned morally good because it may contain a vast number of pleasant moments. It is by "satisfactions," and not by mere "pleasures," that the most determined Hedonist must compute the goodness of a life, if the results of his calculations are to bear any relation to the facts of the unsophisticated moral judgment. There are thus clearly numerous pleasant experiences which must not be called "good," and if we are to estimate the goodness or moral excellence of life by its pleasantness, these experiences must first be allowed for and deducted. The proposition, "the pleasant is the good," cannot then be accepted as it stands. Only when the pleasant experience includes in itself the realisation of an idea is it truly good.

With this proviso, no doubt the pleasant is so far good as not to be utterly bad. Whatever satisfies, were it even for a time, and at the cost of ultimate dissatisfaction, is clearly up to a certain point good, and merits a certain degree of approbation. Absolute badness or moral worthlessness could be

[1] To revert to a previous illustration, Tristan and Isolde presumably did not anticipate the consequences of their drinking the love drink, but those consequences can only be called "good" on the assumption that, when they have arrived, the hero and heroine feel "this is what we really wanted all the time, if we had only known it." A pleasure so novel in character as to correspond to no previous desire or anticipation only becomes "good," I take it, in so far as the felt pleasantness of its earlier stages leads to a desire for its continuance, of which its later stages are then felt to be a gratification.

ascribed to nothing except to a life of drudgery, hateful to the drudge and productive of no satisfaction to any one else. Even the self-inflicted bodily and spiritual mutilations of the ascetic, hateful as they are, may be said to have an element of "goodness" in so far as they do to some extent satisfy their author by producing in him the type of experience at which he aims. We should have the right in any case to condemn them for unfitting him for life in society and social service, but our condemnation would be far less unmeasured than it is if we did not know that these inflictions commonly fail to give the devotee himself the experience for the sake of which they are undertaken.[1]

The further discussion of the relation between the pleasant and the good is best raised by turning to the other question spoken of on the last page. We have to ask—seeing that the pleasant as such is not necessarily good—Is the good as such always pleasant? It would be impossible to give a single answer to this question without defining our terms much more exactly than has yet been done. We shall therefore go at some length into the arguments which may be urged on either side before presenting our conclusion in a compendious form.

(1) It is clear that the good, wherever found, must in some way possess the quality of pleasantness, for the good, as we have seen, is what realises our anticipations—what "satisfies" our cravings, and all "satisfaction" is in itself pleasant. Even an experience which has on all previous occasions been attended with pain may, if its occurrence translates an idea into sensible fact, acquire from its relation to the idea the character of pleasantness. Hence to say the good is pleasant may amount to nothing more than saying, "the satisfying is what satisfies"—a statement which is at once true and tautologous. We may even go a step further and say that whatever line of conduct is approved as "good," ought on examination to be found to

[1] And the "pleasures of sin" are so far forth at least good as they do for a time and to a certain extent give the sinner a kind of experience which satisfies his anticipations, and which could not be obtained in any other way. Ascetic self-torture practised for its own sake is probably the only kind of life which we have the right to condemn without considerable qualifications. Hence Epicurus had reason on his side in his declaration that "if the pleasures of dissipation could remove the mental uneasiness which arises from fear of celestial portents, of death, and of suffering, and could teach us to limit our desires, we should have no reason to condemn them." (Diogenes Laertius, x. 142.)

add to the totality of pleasantly-toned experience for an individual or a larger social whole. This clearly follows from the recognition of the truth already dwelt upon, that nothing is good that does not "satisfy," and consequently bring pleasure to some one. It is a natural extension of this doctrine that in proportion as any act or course of action is morally "good" it must be productive of lasting and unconditional satisfaction to some person or persons.

From the now familiar duality of the moral ideal it will follow that in theory at least the goodness of the act might be measured by two not necessarily according standards—the standard of the degree of lasting satisfaction it secures for the individual, and the standard of the extent of the social circle which in some way derives an increase of satisfaction from it. In practice our standard of happiness, like our moral ideal, is a compromise. We should probably all be agreed that the normal "good" action, as satisfying a want, is productive of pleasure both to the individual and to the community, though the relative prominence of the individual's and the community's share in the resultant pleasure may be very different in different cases. No one, I think, who understands the elements of the problem would assert that an act is good which brings no pleasure at all to any one, neither directly nor indirectly. Even the ascetic self-tormentor, if he is to justify his austerities, must suppose that inflictions which bring no pleasure to himself or his fellows are "well-pleasing" in the eyes of God.[1]

But though we should all agree that an act which is productive of no pleasure is without moral worth, we should probably disagree among ourselves as to the extent to which the pleasure produced by the good act is pleasure for the agent or for others. Except in the interests of a preconceived psychological theory, no one would think of denying that an act may be one of heroic virtue and yet be unproductive of pleasure, or even productive of pain, to the agent who purchases the increase to the pleasure of society by his own self-sacrifice. And we at least, who have been driven to regard self-culture

[1] As a rule, the ascetic also expects his austerities to be "made up to him" by a liberal allowance of pleasures in the next life. Hence we might say the ascetic is not only at heart the most selfish of men, but also the most hypocritical. It is his ineradicable dishonesty which makes him morally so much worse than the vulgar sinner. It is, after all, only an eccentric form of self-seeking to mortify the flesh for the sake of some day sitting on thrones and judging the tribes of Israel.

as equally a virtue with justice, cannot doubt that some acts which we call "good" enhance the pleasure of the agent without enhancing, perhaps at the cost of diminishing, the pleasure of others. In practice, the average conscientious man would probably hold that an act which brings pleasure to himself may be "good," even though it lessens the pleasure of some one else, provided the disproportion between the pleasure gained and the pleasure lost is not too great. But what disproportion is too great he would find himself at a loss to say.

I pass on to a point of much greater theoretic interest. Surely it may be said, when you speak of increasing the sum of pleasure you are forgetting what has been over and over again proved by anti-Hedonist philosophers as to the impossibility of effecting the summation. You cannot intelligibly add together the successive pleasures of an individual life, much less can you add to one another those experienced by different members of the community. Your imaginary Hedonist standard, whether individual or universalistic, is therefore quite untranslatable into fact. If this only meant that the Hedonistic calculus would be a very uncertain rule to go by in deciding what is your duty in practice, I should quite concur in this criticism; indeed, I shall be found repeating it in my own language in the subsequent course of the present discussion. But if it means that you cannot intelligibly say *ex post facto* that a certain course of action has added to the pleasure of the individual or the community, I am bound to dissent from it in the strongest way. You cannot, indeed, as we have already admitted, properly speaking add pleasures together—and so far as we are not concerned to defend the scientific accuracy of some common and convenient Hedonistic expressions; but for all that it remains the fact that the total hedonic effect of a life of continuous and progressive attainment of the satisfaction of one's cravings is very different from that of a life of continual disappointment. It is a perfectly intelligible expression to say that the one life is more pleasurable than the other, in the sense that its experiences are more constantly and habitually marked by the pleasant tone of feeling.

Consequently in the same degree in which it is true

that the "moral" life gives a man what he wants, it is true that the moral life is one of continuous pleasure. If the Hedonists have, as a rule, failed to establish this correspondence, it is because they have without exception committed the mistake of treating "individual" pleasures as finite and literally addible quantities, and have thus come to attach more importance to the "intensity" than to the "purity" of pleasurable feeling. Had they followed the lead which Plato, who may fairly be called, in virtue of well-known passages in the *Protagoras* and *Republic*, an ethical Hedonist, gave them and recognised that it is not merely momentary intensity but abiding continuousness of pleasant emotion by which the good and contented is distinguished from the bad and discontented life, their doctrine would not have assumed that shallow and soulless character which it derives from the special importance it attaches to the "inferior," *i.e.* to the appetitive enjoyments, and we should have been spared such absurdities as the paradox of Bentham that, "quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry."[1]

And with respect to the "increase in the pleasure of the community," of which we have spoken, it should be clear that the phrase has at least a perfectly intelligible meaning. Any act may be said to increase the general pleasure which enriches the lives of the majority of the community with new opportunities of securing lasting and unconditional satisfactions. That such an enlargement of the sources of satisfaction open to the average member of the community is not impossible is assumed in every attempt to compare our social condition with that of our predecessors, and, as we have said in the last chapter, you cannot assert that the history of the species or any part of it exhibits moral progress unless you believe that the progressive

[1] The aphorism seems as true or false as, "quantity of light being equal, night is as bright as day," or "quantity of heat being equal, winter is as warm as summer." Plato would have retorted on Bentham, I think correctly, that "quantity of pleasure" is not and cannot be equal, because the man who has experienced the delights of both poetry and push-pin finds in the former a possibility of ever-widening and progressive satisfaction which the latter cannot yield. One can live happily with one's books if one has a taste for literature, but it is hard to believe that the most enthusiastic player of push-pin would not sicken of his game if he were allowed to attend to nothing else for a single week. In fact you might, in the spirit of Plato, say that if you want to get the greatest enjoyment you can out of "push-pin" you must make something else the main business of life. It would not be equally true to say this of "poetry."

enlargement of the sources of satisfaction open to the average man has been a fact. Though you cannot add one man's pleasures to another man's in order to estimate the total pleasures of the community, you can roughly gauge the amount and distribution of satisfaction over a given social area by considering to what extent the members of the society lead lives of permanent content. There seems to be no absurdity in declaring that the amount of pleasure is greater, as well as its distribution more equitable, in a society of which the vast majority of members lead lives of a high degree of contentment than in one where a few chosen individuals have every contentment that the heart can wish, while the rest of the community drag out discontented existence as mere ministers to the enjoyment of the few. If you take the proportion of contented lives as the measure of the general pleasure, there seems to be meaning enough in the assertion that a given course of conduct tends to increase or lessen the pleasure not only of the agent but of the community to which he belongs.

The difficulties which have been raised as to the concept of the "general pleasure," like the difficulties about the summation of the individual's pleasures, seem in the main due to the way in which the Hedonists have stood in their own light by treating the emotional life as made up of a number of isolated moments of intense feeling. I for one find it impossible to deny that there is to-day "more pleasure," *i.e.* more contented existence concentrated within the bounds of a civilised community, than in the old days of the Hellenic cultivation, which rested on a basis of all but universal slavery. If we have not abolished slavery, except in name,—if we have in some respects added to its horrors,[1]—we have at least diminished the proportion of slaves to the rest of the community. If no one perhaps gets his heart's desire quite so completely as the specially favoured few at Athens or at Syracuse, few of us fail of it so utterly as the vast majority of the inhabitants of these old *Kulturstaaten* must have done. Remembering our description of the practical moral ideal as the attainment of the fullest and richest self-culture compatible with the recognition of the rights of others to such self-culture as they are capable of, we might say that the good and the

[1] Let the reader think of "phossy jaw" and "lead poisoning" and syphilis.

pleasant ultimately coincide so far that the society in which the practical moral ideal is most nearly realised will also be the society in which the average pleasantness of the individual's life is greatest. But just as we found the practical ideal to be a matter of half-hearted compromise, so we shall find that this general coincidence of good and pleasure is compatible with a vast amount of divergence in individual cases.[1]

(2) This leads me to a second point of extreme importance. If you are to maintain with any success the doctrine that goodness and pleasure are on the whole coincident, you must look for the coincidence not in the individual life but in the life of organised society as a whole. Your Hedonism must be not individualistic but universalistic. This follows in fact from our previous recognition of self-sacrifice as an irreducible factor in the ethical life. Clearly, if there are moral duties which demand from the individual sacrifices of his own personal culture and satisfaction which are never made good to him, it becomes impossible to maintain that, for the individual as such, the path of virtue will always be the path of pleasure. With the recognition of the reality of self-sacrifice goes the admission that there may be, in the most ethically organised societies, individuals and even classes who are called upon to give to society more than they ever receive back from it,—individuals or classes for whom the path of right and duty may be one long career of self-denial and consequent pain and suffering.

Every attempt in the interests of Hedonism or of the doctrine of self-realisation, which, unknown to itself, is really a subtler form of Hedonism, to show that the moral and conscientious man is never a loser by his devotion to altruistic ends must involve a vast amount of sophistical misstatement before it can be made even tolerably plausible.

[1] I purposely defer the consideration of the way in which the problem of happiness is affected by the transition from the merely ethical to the religious life. Here, as in previous chapters, I am considering a merely *ethical* community, *i.e.* a community of beings whose happiness is bound up with demonstrable success in the realisation by themselves of their anticipations and cravings. In chap. viii. we shall deal with the modifications of feeling which arise when the life of humanity comes to be regarded simply as one element in an order which is fulfilled as much in our failures as in our successes. For *mere* morality this concept of a more than human order has no meaning: its range of vision is bounded by human effort, human success, and human failure. Strictly speaking, the results of all previous chapters, from chap. iii onwards, are to be regarded as merely provisional until chap. viii. has been studied.

It is indeed hard to speak with patience of the methods of argumentation to which it is necessary to resort in order to show that the citizen who, as soldier or statesman, gives his life for his country, and the martyr who gives his life for his faith, really receive an adequate return for their sacrifice in the shape of pleasure or conscious self-realisation. It is all very well to say that the dying soldier reaps in his knowledge that the enemy have been routed an enjoyment which far outweighs the pain of wounds and death, or that the martyr's contentment in the sense of having pleased his God surpasses the pain of the fire. These things are sometimes so; but for one soldier who is able with Wolfe to enjoy in his last moments the news that the enemy are running, there must be a countless number who are conscious of nothing, or of nothing but the intolerable agony of wounds and thirst. And martyrs—even when the physical suffering of martyrdom leaves them at liberty to think about anything else—have a way of dying with the complaint, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Nor can you defend the ordinary Hedonistic view by falling back on the argument that painful as death in battle or at the stake may be, cowardice and apostasy would, to the hero or the martyr, be still more painful. For the point you have to establish is that the hero's or martyr's experience is a pleasant one, and it is only by something very much like self-deception that pain can be made out to be pleasure because there are worse pains still. Indeed on this principle every one ought to be always perfectly happy, since there is no pain so great but might conceivably be worse. And, even leaving the extreme cases of the martyrs and heroes on one side, it is surely with a real insight into human nature that Plato insists so strongly that the really gifted statesman will feel the call to public office as a demand for unrequited self-sacrifice, and would prefer, if his conscience left him free to consider his own personal happiness, to be free to pursue his ideals of intellectual and æsthetic culture.

On the whole, then, we seem driven to maintain that if pleasure can be taken as a test of the moral goodness of conduct, it must be the pleasure of all, and not the pleasure of the agent. The only consistent ethical Hedonism would be

universalistic. We have to ask, then, Is an universalistic Hedonism possible? It is frequently maintained by writers on ethics, that all Hedonism, if consistent, must be purely individualistic: desire for some one else's pleasure, it is said, is not desire for pleasure. The argument is, of course, directed more particularly against the psychological Hedonism which we have already seen reason to reject, yet, in virtue of its frequency in anti-Hedonist polemics, it seems to call for some remarks from us. As I have already said in chap. iii., I cannot but regard the proposition, "desire for the pleasure of another is not desire for pleasure," as fallacious. There is, no doubt, a sense in which it is true; but it is not the sense which the anti-Hedonist puts upon it. It is true that the desire for the pleasure of another is not a desire for my own pleasure; it is also perhaps true that no desire is desire for pleasure *as such*. But it is not true that a desire for pleasant experiences is necessarily a desire for pleasant experiences *for myself*. Psychologically, pleasure, pain, and desire are all phenomena which make their appearance before the mental life has reached the stage at which self is definitely distinguished off from other selves, and, we may add, they are phenomena which aid in creating the distinction.

The clear and definite discrimination between my "self" and all the rest of the objects I discover in my experience is, as has been shown in another connection, the result of a very elaborate intellectual development—a development in which our experiences of the connection of experiences of pleasure and pain, with certain changes in the appearance of that sense-complex which we ultimately get to know as our body play a very important part. It requires a much greater and more complex development of the "ideal" forms of mental life to form the concept of "myself" as a permanent subject capable of being pleased and pained than it does simply to anticipate with pleasure or with pain the translation into sensible fact of a particular "ideal" suggestion. It is by repeated experience of such transitions, and the consequent formation of elaborate systems of ideal complexes that the concept of my "self" as the uniform subject of my experiences throughout life has been formed. Consequently we should on psychological grounds expect to find evidence of the existence

of those very simple forms of ideal experience, memories and anticipations, long before we can recognise the presence of a true consciousness of "self."

We have already tried to show that the careful observation of facts confirms the views suggested by the consideration of general psychological principles. That any of the lower animals possess the consciousness of self is at least highly unlikely, but there seems to be, *prima facie*, evidence that some of them have at least rudimentary memories and anticipations, and can be pleasurably or painfully affected by the prospect of good or bad treatment for their mates and their young as well as for themselves. And the child, to refer once more to an old illustration, who testifies his unmeasured delight at the prospect of a satisfactory ending to the tale you are telling him, seems to be directly moved to pleasure by the prospect of enjoyments which are not for himself.

What else, indeed, could one expect? What is more natural than that the suggested idea of certain experiences, which have in the past been found agreeable, should itself be pleasant even before the animal or child has learned to reflect "this is or this is not for me?" Must we suppose that anticipations are neither pleasant nor painful until the subject of them has advanced so far in the construction of complex ideal products as to classify the contents of his experience habitually as "myself and other things," and to discriminate between the anticipations which concern myself and those which do not? As far as I can see, neither general psychological principle nor the facts gleaned from direct observation warrant so improbable a conclusion. And unless we, in the face of all psychological probability, insist on this conclusion, we cannot deny that it is possible to desire directly and immediately pleasant experiences which are not my own.

In other words, the experiences in which a pleasurable anticipation is turned into fact are always of moral worth, whether they fall within "my own" experience or not. The popularity of the assumption that only my own pleasure can be directly "desired" is due to the widespread confusion between the felt pleasure of the anticipation and the future pleasantness of its realisation. Because it is *I* who in every case have the pleasure of the anticipation, it is assumed that it must

also be *I* who am to experience the realisation of the anticipation. But there is really no logical connection whatever between premises and conclusion of this inference. It is really no more paradoxical that I should anticipate with pleasure some event not to form part of my own direct sensible experience than it is that I should find pleasure in the anticipation of anything that as future is as yet unreal and non-existent.

The principles upon which it is asserted that all desire for pleasure must be primarily desire for my own pleasure ought, if pressed, to lead to the conclusion that there can be no such thing as desire. There is really nothing more wonderful in the fact that I can take a direct interest in some one else than in the fact that I can be directly interested in my "own" future, which lies as completely outside the limits of my now existing "self" as do the joys and sorrows of my neighbours. Any argument which would prove that I cannot be directly interested in these latter because they are not "myself," would prove the same conclusion for my own as yet non-existent future. Indeed it requires greater ideal development to feel at twenty an interest in "myself" as I expect to be at eighty than it does to sympathise with the pleasures and pains of relatives and friends whose present sensible existence I am being hourly reminded of. Improvident benevolence, which ought on the principle of egoistic Hedonism to be one of the rarest, is actually one of the commonest of human failings.

I may, in concluding what I have to say upon this head, quote the passage from a recent writer on psychology to which I have already referred in chap. iii.: "Whether we judge our experience as our own or another's may be left entirely out of consideration as far as the definition we have given of the feeling of craving is concerned. . . . As we have already seen, the distinction between contents of consciousness which are represented as our own and as another's by no means arises spontaneously; such a distinction is only made upon special occasions, and when it appears is no more than a secondary process which can cause no modification in the character of the experience of craving itself."[1]

[1] Cornelius, *Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft*, pp. 374, 375.

The general inference from all that has been said is that a universal Hedonism is as psychologically possible as it is ethically necessary, if we are, without violence to the facts of life, to maintain the existence of a correspondence between the good and the pleasant. We have no warrant that our own lives will be pleasant in proportion to their moral worth, but then, as we have just seen, it is not exclusively for ourselves that we desire pleasant experience. That directly or indirectly the experiences we desire are experiences of *pleasure* cannot really be denied. If the net result of our moral strivings and struggles is not to diminish the quantity of painful, and to increase the quantity of pleasurable experience, then all of us who are not committed beforehand to the support of an ethical theory through thick and thin will admit that human life fails of its objects, and human morality is mere vanity. Even the convinced pessimist, who holds that all our efforts fail to increase the amount of human pleasure, or even only succeed in increasing the sum of human pain, is so far at one with an enlightened ethical Hedonism that he finds life a cheat and an illusion on the strength of this failure of morality to produce pleasure. But, as we can now see, the failure of virtue to bring pleasure into our own individual life need not force us into the pessimist camp; for it is only by a psychological mistake that we at times persuade ourselves that the only pleasure we desire is our own. If we could answer the question how far the ways of virtue are at the same time ways of pleasantness, it is not to our own private experiences but to the life of the whole community that we must look. We are surely all of us so far ethical Hedonists that we should feel morality condemned if we saw reason to believe that the satisfaction and content of the average member of society were not raised by moral and social progress.

How far then should we be justified in asserting that, when viewed in relation to society at large, the moral act is productive of pleasant and the immoral of painful experience? The correspondence clearly cannot be taken to be at any given stage in social development absolute. It is at least conceivable that the majority of a community might, for a time, find pleasure in acts which tend directly to the dissolution or

extinction of society, and are therefore naturally disapproved by a moral judgment which has been formed under the pressure of social necessity. This state of things is well illustrated by the curious perversions of sexual feeling which seem at times to affect a given society through a succession of generations. It is clear that a society would soon die out unless the judgment of its members on the whole approved such forms of sexual feeling as are most compatible, and disapproved such as are incompatible with the successful perpetuation of the stock. At the same time it is perfectly possible that, for a long continued period, a number or even the greater number of the members of the society might find the traditional moral judgments on such matters in opposition to their personal tastes. So long as this opposition lasts, there would be a standing divergence between the dictates of recognised morality and the path of pleasure, and the virtuous man might feel himself obliged to say to the majority of his countrymen, with Sir. J. Stephen, "If I wanted to make you happy—which I do not—I should have to pamper your vices, which I will not." The history of civilisation is by no means devoid of striking illustrations of this conflict between the moral judgments of the best minds of the community and the tastes of the majority. In Athens, for instance, philosophy found itself in sharp opposition to the popular sentiment about *παιδεραστία*, and all readers of modern French philosophical literature are aware that there is, at this moment, an equally sharp antagonism between the views of the moralists and the practice of a large section of the population with respect to the artificial limitation of the family.[1]

Where such a conflict of sentiment exists, the necessities of permanent social existence as expressed in the moral judgment pointing in one direction, and the current tastes of a generation or series of generations in another, it is clear that for the time the moral and the pleasure-giving act do not coincide. The life of society, as a whole, is made more contented and pleasanter by violation of the moral judgment than by compliance with it. But it is also clear that, on the whole, so sharp an antagonism between the most fundamental

[1] See, for instance, the striking discussion in Guyau's *Non-Religion of the Future*. English translation, pp. 315-349.

requisites of a permanent social order and the tastes of the community can only be a transitional stage in the social development. Either there must come a reaction in which the moral sentiment will prevail over the opposing taste, or else with the spread of the abnormal taste the moral sentiment of approbation must itself alter. In the latter case, the creation of a new and "perverted" moral sentiment is of course an important step towards the final disappearance of the community, which has now come definitely to approve of acts that make for social extinction. It would, however, at the same time, restore the harmony between moral sentiment and pleasure.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the general aversion of mankind to painful experiences is any guarantee against such occasional perversions of the moral judgment of a community. As in the biological organism, so in the moral society, it is not always the most formidable diseases that are the most painful. It is at least conceivable that a succession of generations might continue to find pleasure in, and finally to give undivided approbation to, a type of life which was steadily leading the whole society to the abyss of extermination. As in the days of Noah, the community might go on feasting and merry-making and enjoying its existence "until the flood came and took them away." It even appears conceivable that such a painless dry rot might infect and ultimately destroy the whole human race. Such a consummation cannot be shown to be impossible by an appeal to the general biological correspondence between pleasure and the preservation and perpetuation of the species. For man, in his ability to transform his environment, possesses a kind of control over the conditions under which the acts originating in self-preservative or reproductive instinct are performed such that he can succeed in obtaining the pleasure of those actions while defeating their biological object. If he cannot, for instance, destroy the sexual instinct, he can contrive to satisfy it under conditions which secure that it shall be unproductive. If he cannot help feeling pain when hungry and thirsty, he can learn to get pleasure from satisfying his hunger and thirst with delicious poison.

Hence it is not, I conceive, unimaginable that the cosmic

suicide which von Hartmann recommends might one day really come about, not by a formal resolve, but by the gradual transference of moral approbation to forms of conduct which tend towards the painless extinction of the species. Already the more intelligent minds of France are beginning to regard a national suicide of this kind as a possible danger, and advocate administrative measures for its prevention, and there seems to be no sound logical reason for denying that the sentiments which seem to be threatening the extinction of a great nation might, under altered conditions of existence, be one day shared by the general mass of mankind.[1]

For these reasons it seems impossible to admit the force of the familiar argument that morality must be pleasant because it is conducive to life. There is a morality of life, and it has necessarily been the first morality man has learned, but I see no reason why, now that man has found out the way to cheat Nature and to get the pleasure connected with acts conducive to life, under conditions which baffle her purposes, there should not some day be a morality of death. In that case the act destructive to life would be satisfactory and pleasant, the act conducive to life unpleasant by comparison. A man would, for instance, then have the same feeling of being ill-used and cheated by Nature at the birth of a child as he now has when his marriage remains permanently sterile. The conversion of the whole world to such a morality of death is no doubt in the highest degree unlikely, but that is not sufficient reason for treating it as impossible.

Incidentally these reflections may serve to confirm us in the view which we took in our chapter on the "Roots of Ethics," that the simplest phenomena to which the moralist can reduce the elements of his science are still psychological and not merely biological. For the present, my interest in these considerations is simply to point out that even if you grant the possible divorce of morality from the conservation and propagation of life, you need not reject the modified Hedonist position. It would be only during the first throes

[1] I do not, of course, regard this result as in any way likely, and, if one is to take account only of contingencies which have a finite degree of probability, I should agree that it may be dismissed from consideration. But I can see nothing psychologically impossible in the idea.

of the transition from a life-giving to a death-giving morality, before the altered tastes of mankind had had time to affect their traditional judgments of approbation, that there would be a divergence between the ethical and the pleasant line of conduct. Ultimately, when the ethical sentiments had been transformed by the new tastes of the race, the death-giving but not physically agonising act would be that which was anticipated with pleasure, and, when realised, accompanied with the sense of satisfaction; the pleasant but life-giving act, *e.g.* the exercise of the sexual functions without steps to prevent impregnation, would be regarded exactly as indulgences which though pleasant are condemned, are regarded now. With conscientious persons, the unpleasant feeling arising from the knowledge of the view taken of the act by society, or from the consciousness that it tended to frustrate the realisation of one's most imperative cravings, would outweigh the pleasure inseparable from its performance. Except in periods of transition, during which men's tastes and their moral ideals are temporarily out of harmony, the normal state of things is for the act which is morally approved to be attended with an increase of satisfaction, either to the agent, or to those around him, or to both, and the act which is morally disapproved with pain.

We may, then, so far accept an universalistic ethical Hedonism as to admit that the normal results of the moral act are pleasurable, when its effect upon the whole social circle influenced by it are taken into account. This statement, however, it must be remembered, is liable to considerable incidental modification. Wherever, from any reason, the tastes and inclinations of a given larger or smaller social circle are out of harmony with the traditional moral sentiments prevalent among them, the coincidence between the moral and the pleasure-giving suffers disturbance. As the conditions of existence, and with them the tastes of various sections of the community, are on the whole more easily modified than the traditional moral code of society, this disturbance must constantly be taking place on a small scale, and it would only be in a perfect society, *i.e.* in a society with stable social institutions and a corresponding stability of sectional tastes and habits, that the coincidence of goodness and pleasure could be

completely realised. In every imperfect society—that is, in every society which has not succeeded in establishing a system so permanently suited to the character of those who have to live under it, and so adequate to the needs of all classes of the community as to be equally secure from revolution from within and transformation from without—the normal relation between the morally satisfying and the pleasurable must be liable to an incalculable amount of disturbance. Though it remains generally true that the average pleasantness of life is increased by the moral progress of society, it would be impossible anywhere but in the New Jerusalem to assert with confidence that every individual moral act is productive of pleasure.

Thus we can see that the Hedonist assumption, however generally true, is not without considerable exceptions, and consequently that Hedonism would be one of the worst possible guides to immediate moral practice. For, in the present imperfect state of society, the hedonic consequences of an action are not necessarily a measure of its morality. Just as you would be constantly going grievously wrong if you took the immediate pleasantness of an action as a measure of the degree in which it promotes personal self-culture, so you would be continually falling into mistakes if you treated the hedonic effects of an act which are traceable as a measure of its influence upon the self-culture of society. In order to make the hedonic effects of your act a true measure of its beneficial tendencies you would need to know not only how your immediate circle, but how society in general, and even how the remotest posterity, will be affected by your conduct. Conduct which, for the present, seems as unpleasant in its effects upon others as it is unpleasant to yourself may nevertheless ultimately make for the multiplication of the sources of satisfaction open to future generations; conduct which affords pleasure both to yourself and the society in which you live may do so only at the cost of impoverishing the life of the community in the future. For this reason it would be useless to attempt to guide yourself in practice by a "hedonic calculus." To make your calculus a certain guide to morality you would need to know the full consequences of every one of your contemplated actions upon all your successors as well as

upon all your contemporaries, and this is a knowledge which is absolutely unattainable. It would be the wildest presumption to infer to the whole results of an action from the trivial fragment of them which we can with confidence estimate.

Hence, even from the Hedonist point of view it would be wiser to accept your station and its duties, and content yourself with the moral code of your society, than to try to work out a private hedonic calculus for your own guidance. For, after all, the accepted laws of morality do express certain convictions of society as to the ways in which on the whole the pleasantest life is secured to the average man, and the experience upon which these convictions are based is infinitely wider than any directly accessible to myself. It is only reasonable to admit of society what is in the main true of the individual of mature age, that it has lived long enough to know better than any one else what is and what is not permanently pleasant to it. I may be tempted, for instance, to think that a given act of dishonesty or sexual irregularity will, as far as I can see, be productive of pleasure to every one affected by it, but then I have to set against my calculation of the immediate consequences of this particular act the verdict of a social experience extending over centuries, that conduct tending to lower the standard of honesty or sexual purity is in the long run productive of widely diffused unpleasant consequences.

In practice then I should have, in every case where my individual calculation of results favoured a departure from the recognised moral rules, to take into consideration the probability that if my outlook were less narrowly limited, I should find that the experience of society was justified in this case also. If this be remembered, it will, I think, be seen that a modified ethical Hedonism would be no more likely than any other moral theory to lead logically to wholesale practical departure from the received moral codes. Against the old egoistic and psychological Hedonism Mr. Bradley's contention that, if seriously accepted, it would lead to constant practical violation of all established moral laws was valid precisely because the old Hedonism assumed that *my own* pleasure is the sufficient measure of the morality of my conduct. As to what will give me personally pleasure of course I ought, when once I have

had sufficient experience to know my own mind, to be a better judge than society, and should therefore, if my own pleasure were the only thing that had to be taken into account, be under no obligation to attach any importance to the recommendation of society. But when it comes to pronouncing upon the effects of my behaviour on the pleasures or pains of an indefinite number of human beings, I may reasonably be asked to admit that the gathered wisdom of centuries is a better guide than my own private judgment. It is indeed only this admission which prevents the practical violation of moral rules from becoming common, upon any but a purely formal ethical theory like that of Kant. Once admit that the material circumstances of the particular act affect its moral goodness or badness, and the only plea by which you can justify your refusal to break a recognised moral law when the circumstances of the case, be they what they may, seem to require it, is the plea that the law probably represents a wider experience of such cases than the limits of your individual history have permitted to you.[1]

I conclude, then, that universalistic Hedonism is in the main a true doctrine, though it would only be absolutely true in a morally perfect society, but that it is useless as a guide to actual moral practice. A more serious objection to it as a speculative theory is what I may call its exceeding superficiality. If you ask what is the moral good, Hedonism replies it is the pleasant, or it is that which is on the whole productive of pleasure. But, as we have seen already, not all that

[1] Of course, in deciding whether to break a recognised moral law, you are bound also to consider how far that law does fairly represent the "gathered wisdom of ages," and how far, on the other hand, it has been impressed on society in the first instance by some single man of commanding ethical or religious genius, and accepted ever since without adequate examination on mere authority, or how far again it is a mere survival of an earlier state of things against which the experience of the community, as reflected in the lives of its great men, has so far protested only in vain. A discussion, for instance, of questions connected with our own law of marriage and divorce would illustrate both these points. Before you could affirm that the collective experience of mankind has decided irrevocably against divorce for other reasons than adultery, you would have to satisfy yourself (*a*) that the present consensus against the liberty of divorce is really the outcome of experience and not of a reverent and uncritical acquiescence in the ruling of the gospels, and (*b*) that there is no counter-consensus of any weight among the "enlightened few" who know better than the majority in any generation how to read the lessons of experience aright. I make this remark simply in order to guard against being mistaken for a mere blind conservative in questions of morals; it is, of course, no part of my object or of my business in this Essay to express an opinion, one way or the other, on the merits of any particular rule of established ethics.

is pleasant has moral value, and hence Hedonism is superficial in taking pleasure instead of *satisfaction* (*i.e.* the pleasure attendant upon the realisation of an idea) as its equivalent for goodness or worth. But even if we amend the formula and make it run, "the good is that which gives satisfaction," the superficiality of Hedonism is not done away with. For we have a right to expect from any moral theory that it should attempt to go a step further and define some of the leading characteristics of the concrete types of life in which humanity finds its satisfactions. And the moment you take this task of defining the "satisfactory" seriously you begin to find yourself in the presence of that conflict between two great rival types of goodness or satisfaction of which we have spoken so frequently in previous chapters.

Any ethical theory which offers us as its account of the "good" some statement in which this conflict is left unnoticed stands *ipso facto* convicted of having never really got beyond the outside fringe of the subject. There is a story of a schoolboy who described poetry as "what you get when the lines all begin with a capital letter and are not of the same length." The description is accurate enough so far as it goes, but it has only fixed certain of the external peculiarities of poetry to the entire neglect of its really essential characteristics. The definition of the good as the "pleasant" has always struck me as being remarkably like this schoolboy's account of poetry. What I complain of in it is not that it is not, with the modifications I have indicated, true, but that it affords no clue whatever to the leading concrete characteristics of the type of existence which the experience of mankind has pronounced to be at once the "good" and the "pleasant" life.

It is on this account principally that the ethics of "self-realisation," with all their speculative imperfections, must be pronounced a great advance upon the ethics of mere pleasure. The definition of the good as "self-realisation" at least leads directly to a psychological and sociological inquiry into the constitution of the self which you are told to realise, and thus opens up the way for a working theory as to the relative importance in the scheme of life of various aspects of the self and various directions in which self-realisation may be sought.

The Hedonistic theories, from the very nature of the case, are precluded from raising this question, which is after all the fundamental question for a science of conduct. The various courses of action which agree in being pleasurable are so numerous and so heterogeneous in other respects that it would be impossible on a purely Hedonistic basis to arrive at any intelligible classification of them, or any systematic distinction between the more and the less important.

Thus, while "self-realisation" may be successfully used as a convenient working theory for the purpose of establishing a subordination of less to more valuable sources of satisfaction, Hedonism can only achieve the same object at the cost of making distinctions between "higher" and "lower" forms of pleasure, which are absolutely inconsistent with what professes to be its fundamental proposition. "Self-realisation" thus can be made, without undue violence to its own principles, to yield some sort of outline description of the concrete features of the satisfactory life, while Hedonism, uncontaminated by foreign accretions, can get no further than the enunciation of an abstract general proposition which, though as we have seen true enough when you have explained its proper meaning and necessary limitations, affords no answer at all to the real problems of ethical inquiry. Instead of attempting, however imperfectly, to answer the question, What in its general features is the satisfactory life? Hedonism contents itself with the true but tautologous reflection that the satisfactory life is on the whole a pleasant one. Further than this a theory which starts by confusing "satisfaction" with mere "pleasure" cannot go; the first condition of any successful account of the satisfactory life is the execution of just that sociological and psychological analysis of the "satisfactory" from which Hedonism, by its initial confusion, excuses itself.

Hence Hedonism has really no theory of the relative "worth" of different types of experience, and cannot therefore in strictness be regarded as an "ethical doctrine" at all. In its psychological form it is, as we have seen, a mass of singularly baseless assumptions, while in what we have called its ethical shape it is no more than the enunciation of a general proposition which might, so far as it is true at all, be affirmed in connection with almost any theory of the funda-

mental peculiarities of the moral experience. Even a Kantist, for instance, might without doing any violence to his doctrine of the categorical imperative, be an ethical Hedonist if he were prepared to admit that, when you take a sufficiently wide range of experience into account, you will find that the general diffusion of pleasurably-toned emotion is greatest where the dictates of the practical reason are most universally and most unhesitatingly obeyed. But a Hedonism which is thus capable of reconciliation with any and every doctrine of the concrete characteristics of the moral ideal has been for good or bad emptied of all its special content and deprived of all speculative importance. The Hedonism which, as we have satisfied ourselves, can be successfully defended against hostile criticism is a doctrine which need only be controverted by a fanatic who should deny the existence of *any* connection or correspondence between the path of duty and the path of happiness.

Regarded as an attempt to bridge over the dualism which we have seen to be inherent in the moral ideal, and to exhibit the ethical life as the consistent outgrowth of a single psychological principle, Hedonism must, for reasons given in the previous pages, be pronounced a complete failure. For the only Hedonism which can be intelligibly maintained must, as we have said, take into account the happiness of the various wider wholes to which the individual belongs, as well as his own, and must thus, like every other theory, make room for the constant collision of the narrower and the wider, the self-regarding and the social ideals. Hedonism is no more successful than any other theory in reconciling the claims of a narrow but intense individuality with those of a widely diffused benevolent activity. And like other moral theories, it only appears to the unreflecting to have got over these difficulties because it habitually ignores their existence. This is all that need, for the special purposes of the present Essay, be said of the various ethical systems which explicitly or implicitly identify the good with pleasure.[1]

[1] The purely ethical object of the foregoing discussion has prevented me from devoting any part of the text to discussing the *psycho-physical* fallacy which appears to vitiate every form of Hedonistic theory. The point is, however, sufficiently important to demand mention at least in a footnote. The fundamental error of Hedonism, then, to my mind, is that it regards our pleasure and pain feelings as the *creators*, whereas they are only in point of fact the modifiers, of our motor responses to stimuli. Hedonism is, in this respect, the exact ethical counterpart of the Lockian

The Ethics of Duty.—I turn now from the ethics of Pleasure to the ethics of Duty. "Duty for duty's sake" is a formula which linguistic custom has connected in a special way with the Kantian doctrine of the purely formal imperative. I do not, however, propose here to devote any space to the consideration of the peculiar features of the system expounded in the Critique of Practical Reason. The inherent absurdity of the theory that moral obligation can be reduced to the obligation of acting with mere formal self-consistency, has been so well and so often exposed already that I could on this topic only say in my own way what better men have said much more forcibly before me. But, apart from the special peculiarities of the moral theory of Kant, it is possible to hold, and it is widely held, that the contents of the ethical consciousness may be successfully represented as a single coherent system of obligations. These obligations need not be treated as springing from a single and purely formal obligation to avoid contradiction; indeed, for the purposes of ethics, it might be argued, no question as to their origin need arise. It is sufficient that we are aware of them and that they can be combined into some sort of system.

"Your difficulties, as set forth in previous chapters," the Intuitionist might tell us, "have been created by your perverse way of raising the moral problem. Instead of starting with the notion of a *good* or *end* of conduct you should have begun with the concept of duty or obligation. You should have asked not what if I could get it would give me final satisfaction, but what line of conduct do I feel it incumbent on me to follow? You would then find that in

doctrine that the mind, until stored with memories resulting from experience, is "a sheet of white paper" or an "empty cabinet." *I.e.* it assumes that there are no preformed types of motor response to stimulus so deeply ingrained in our inherited psycho-physical constitution as to resist modification or transformation by experiences of their painful consequences. This assumption seems strangly at variance with what is actually known of the instincts of the lower animals as well as of the passions of mankind. The sexual instinct of the male spider, for instance, does not seem to be diminished in intensity by the fact that it cannot be gratified without serious risk of being devoured by the female (see for the facts Romanes' *Animal Intelligence*, pp. 204, 205). Nor does the appearance in historic times of syphilis seem likely to create any wide-spread or permanent modification of the sexual passion in man. Human intelligence, enlightened by painful experience of the consequences of sexual irregularities, turns rather to the attempt to suppress venereal disease than to the more audacious attempt to suppress the sexual instinct.

any society there are a certain number of convictions upon this subject which are in theory at least shared by the normal individuals. There is a general consensus among the members of any society as to the acts which they feel obliged to perform or to shun, and this consensus may be expressed in a number of separate but not inconsistent moral imperatives. The unity of the moral life which you have failed to find in your examination of the ends of action really consists in the mutual coherency of these moral imperatives. That coherency will vary in degree with the intelligence and civilisation of the community, but the fact remains that in civilised societies the various individuals have in common a number of convictions as to what they must and must not do.

"Thus the unity of virtue means no more than this, that the ethical convictions of a society will, in proportion to its intelligence, take the form of commands which are (1) not mutually self-contradictory, and (2) are recognised as universally binding on all members of the community alike. Virtue is one only in the sense that one moral rule does not contradict another, and that every moral rule is equally a rule for every member of the society. All your difficulties have arisen from the attempt to substitute for this real universality and mutual consistency of moral rules an imaginary unity of moral ends."

This is, I think, the attitude which might be adopted by an intelligent Intuitionist towards our previous discussion, and in passing these criticisms he would, I apprehend, express the feeling of many reflective persons who, without being exactly philosophers, take an interest in ethical problems. The suggested criticism is, moreover, in itself so plausible that it will be well worth our while to examine it in some detail, and to point out its strength as well as its weakness.

And first, as to the strength of a chastened Intuitionism, we may at least say that—if you consent to waive all questions of the whence and the whither of the ethical judgments—this doctrine does provide a fair working theory which is, on the whole, true to the facts of the moral consciousness as they appear in the average adult member of a civilised community. The moral convictions of such a man do, for his own eye, take the form of a number of imperatives which he is

content to obey without asking too curiously after their origin or credentials. Hence, in virtue of its close affinity with the facts of the moral consciousness as they appear at a certain low level of reflection, Intuitionism of this reasonable sort has always proved a better guide in matters of practice than Hedonism, which, as soon it ceases to be an immoral paradox, seems fated to sink into a piece of empty tautology.

It is clear again that so long as we are concerned only with ethics apart from a theory of ultimate philosophy, Intuitionism has a marked advantage over any such doctrine of the formal Imperative as Kant's. Kant has been, in my judgment, unanswerably criticised both for making his imperatives categorical and for basing them on a purely formal principle, but it is against the latter point that the brunt of hostile criticism has always been directed. It would be possible, though after what we have said in earlier chapters it will be manifest that we do not think it would be reasonable, to maintain that the various moral "laws" which embody the conscientious convictions of civilised society admit of no exception, and that in every case where duty seems to demand the violation of them reflection would show that what seemed to be duty was really mere inclination in one of its numerous disguises. But it is not possible, except by playing with words or by tacitly taking into account the very material circumstances which you have professedly excluded, to evolve a whole system of concrete morality from a command not to behave inconsistently. To make the theory work, to bridge over the enormous gulf between formal inconsistency and wrong-doing, you must at least mentally interpret "inconsistency" to mean inconsistency with the general conditions imposed on human action by the particulars of our physical and social environment. If mere formal consistency with self be your moral ideal, any principle which cannot be expressed in the form of a merely identical judgment, A = A, violates the demand for consistency, and your only way to avoid sinning every time you act would be to do nothing at all. This point has been made so abundantly clear by the critics of Kant, from Hegel downwards, that we may fairly take it as finally established; were it not for a certain tendency to edification that it possesses, Kant's doctrine of the purely formal imperative would long ere this

have been relegated to the limbo where repose the "sensible species," the "immateriate forms," and the rest of the phantasies of an exploded metaphysic.

An Intuitionist doctrine which refuses to make the attempt to derive its moral imperatives from a single superior principle, but contents itself with taking them in their fully concrete shape as given, and with maintaining only that they are so far a single system that they do not in practice clash with one another, thus escapes, so long as no question about psychological origins or final ends of action is mooted, from the most palpable errors of the Critique of Practical Reason, and on this ground, Butler is likely to outlive Kant as the moralist who best expresses the convictions of conscientious and educated but unphilosophical men. The philosopher, however, even if he regards ethics as unaffected by questions of ultimate metaphysics, cannot avoid raising both these problems—that of the psychological character of obligation and that of the final end or aim of moral action.

The first question arises of itself the moment any serious attempt is made to investigate the relations of the peculiarly ethical experiences to others which resemble them in including an element of obligatoriness, such, for instance, as the artist's sense of loyalty to the principles of his art, or the logician's demand for reasoning which satisfies his standard of validity. The serious prosecution of the psychological analysis thus set up leads at once to the recognition of the judgment of approbation as the fundamental ethical fact, and thus, as we have tried to show at length in our third chapter, to a theory of the nature and genesis of obligation which is quite inconsistent with the doctrine of the primitive and unanalysable character of the sense of "ought."

The other question, the question about the ultimate end of moral action, forces itself upon us with equal insistence as soon as we recognise that "duties," in a concrete instance, may clash, and seek for our practical guidance to establish some sort of precedency among them. Before you can answer the question, "Which is the great commandment?"—in other words, before you can create a table of approximate ethical values, you must have formed some general notion of the part played by morality as a whole in human life, and the nature of the experience

which in all moral action we are more or less successfully striving to realise. Thus it is not from any perverse determination to make ethics fit at all costs into a preconceived metaphysical scheme, but by practical necessities which would have to be faced by the least metaphysical of moralists, that we are led to raise the question, which Intuitionism has always shirked, of the ultimate character of the moral ideal. Unless it can be shown that the apparent collision of duties and conflict of obligations of which we have spoken so much in earlier chapters is not real, but will be found in every case to vanish before close study and intelligent insight, Intuitionism must be admitted to be no more than what, according to our contention in chap. iv., all practical codes of ethics are—a convenient but unprincipled and ultimately unintelligible compromise between irreconcilable ideals. I have, however, devoted so much space in earlier chapters to this question of the reality of the collision of duties, that the reader would hardly thank me for repeating once more the arguments on which I have already rested my case.

The point which I would emphasise in the present connection is a slightly different one, but a full consideration of it is, I am convinced, no less fatal to the claims of Intuitionism to be anything more than a practically convenient but speculatively false account of the moral experience. Previous chapters have convinced us that, within one and the same individual, there are conflicting moral ideals which from time to time give rise to an insoluble conflict of obligations, and that the comparative rarity of such conflicts in our moral experience is due simply to the fact that the necessity of prompt action usually compels us to acquiesce in compromises for which there is often from the theoretical point of view very little to be said. This is in itself a sufficient refutation of ethical Intuitionism; but worse yet remains behind. Even if the Intuitionist could succeed in explaining away all cases of apparent conflict of obligations within the individual, we should still have no maintain that it is impossible, without violence to the facts of the moral experience, to construct a system of duties which shall be equally obligatory on all the individuals. The assumption common to the various Intuitionist theories, that an imperative which holds good for one member

of the moral community holds equally good for all the others —or is even in Kantian phrase "a maxim for all intelligent beings"—is practically convenient, but is, as may easily be shown, intellectually false. There is about every systematised code of duties a subjective character which effectually prevents its being regarded as imperatively binding except upon the individual whose personal convictions it formulates, or on others exceptionally like him in psychological constitution and social environment. In itself this statement comes to little more than the truism that my approbations have for me a psychological necessity which they would not have for a differently consituted person, but this consideration, simple as it is, is so constantly ignored by those who insist upon the universal and objective character of moral obligation, that it will be well to examine it a little more in detail.[1]

The question we have to ask ourselves, then, is this. Is the system of imperatives in which my conviction as to my duty finds its usual and natural expression, peculiar and personal to myself, or have I the right to regard these imperatives as valid for others in the same sense and to the same degree as my judgments upon the ordinary facts given in sense-perception or the propositions of physical science? Intuitionism is compelled by its first principles to adopt the latter alternative; what I propose to show is, that we must in theory, whatever we may do in practice, decide for the former. Let me remind

[1] Plato—who anticipated so many subsequent developments in philosophy—has given us by anticipation what may fairly be called a complete refutation of the doctrine of the "categorical imperative." I transcribe the passage at length, partly because of the undeserved neglect into which the magnificent dialogue which contains it seems to have fallen, partly because the reputation of its author as a preacher of righteousness may do something towards removing the suspicion that in rejecting Kantianism and its ethical universals we are opening the way for moral anarchy.

Politicus, 294 C:—*τὸν δέ γε νόμον ὀρῶμεν σχεδὸν ἐπ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο ξυντείνοντα, ὥσπερ τινὰ ἄνθρωπον αὐθάδη καὶ ἀμαθῆ καὶ μηδένα μηδὲν ἐῶντα ποιεῖν παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τάξιν, μηδ' ἐπερωτᾶν μηδένα, μηδ' ἄν τι νέον ἄρα τῳ ξυμβαίνῃ βέλτιον παρὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν αὐτὸς ἐπέταξεν. . . . οὐκοῦν ἀδύνατον εὖ ἔχειν πρὸς τὰ μηδέποτε ἁπλᾶ τὸ διὰ παντὸς γιγνόμενον ἁπλοῦν;* Plato would clearly have sympathised with the spirit in which Wagner's Wotan meets the objection to moral innovations, though hardly with the particular application of the principle to the case of Siegmund and his sister,—

"Was von selbst sich fügt,
Das erfährst du *heut*."

It is gratifying too to find the "first of those who know" so boldly recognising in the "categorical imperative" the essential spirit of persecution. If the doctrine of the categorical and universal imperative were really carried out by everybody in practice, we may fairly say with Plato in the same dialogue (p. 299 E), that *ὁ βίος, ὃν καὶ νῦν χαλεπός, εἰς τὸν χρόνον ἐκεῖνον ἀβίωτος γίγνοιτ' ἂν τὸ παράπαν.*

the reader of a few of the leading results of our psychological analysis of the moral judgment. We found in chap. iii. that the real psychological facts expressed by the judgment, "I ought to do this," are the approval of the idea of the suggested action, together with the recognition that the action is *expected* of me. It may, as we saw, be expected by public opinion, by the God of my tribe or nation, or finally, at a high level of reflective self-consciousness, by myself. Similarly, a system of obligations means, when translated into psychological fact, a scheme of life which meets with my fixed and deliberate approval, and to which I am expected to conform, whether by my countrymen, my God, or my own clear and calm judgment. Thus, ultimately, "I ought to do this" means, "the leaving of this undone would conflict with my deliberate judgment as to the type of life of which I approve and which I expect from myself," and "I ought not to do this" means, "though I should enjoy doing it, I should, by doing it, introduce confusion and failure into my endeavours after the type of life of which I approve." And I suppose we may safely follow Mr. Bosanquet in saying that a man of intelligence and experience becomes by the time he has reached mid-life practically infallible for himself—that is, the general scheme of life of which his deliberate judgment approves becomes substantially fixed and secure against serious disturbance, either from changes in his social environment or from the sudden development of unsuspected psychological peculiarities within himself.[1]

The question is, How much more than this personal and subjective infallibility may we ascribe to the moral imperatives in which a given subject expresses his convictions as to the kind of life it is rational for him to lead? May we with confidence pass from "I ought to do this" to "you ought to do this," and, if we are met with the rejoinder, "But I recognise no such obligation," can we legitimately go on to say, "Then you ought"? Is there, over and above the obligation to act in a certain way which is, psychologically speaking, created by my conviction

[1] Though, of course, as Mr. Bradley has remarked (*Ethical Studies*, p. 49), exceptional circumstances may at any age lead to the manifestation of unexpected psychological characteristics which may work havoc with the apparently most fixed habits and schemes of life. To his instance of the elderly man who falls violently in love for the first time in his life, we may add the extraordinary reversals of ethical judgments brought about by great political and social crises, such as the "Terror" in France at the end of the last century.

that not to act in that way will involve disloyalty to the plan of life I consider rational and worthy, a further obligation to frame my convictions as to the rational type of life so as to harmonise with those of others? Can we ever say with complete confidence to another man, "You ought to approve what I approve, and if you do not, so much the worse for you"?

Two answers have at various times been given to this question, neither of which seems able to stand the test of thorough and impartial criticism. According to the extreme subjective view of the case,—a view which, though not represented by any name of note in philosophy, is not unknown in general literature,—my ethical convictions can never express more than my own personal preference[1] for one form of experience over another. If this were the case the maxim *de gustibus non est disputandum* would have to be extended from the region of æsthetic appreciations to that of the moral and practical judgment. In proportion as I have learned to know my own mind my system of preferences would indeed acquire a sort of obligatoriness for myself; it would, to say the least of it, be very ill-advised on my part for the sake of some momentary pleasure or advantage to jeopardise the realisation of those objects with which, as I have learned from painful experiences in the past, my lasting happiness is bound up, and hence even a moral judgment that expressed no more than a personal preference might reasonably exercise a strong compulsive influence upon the conduct of the person whose preference it recorded. But—upon the view we are contemplating —you would never be entitled to expect from another man more agreement with your ethical preferences than with your æsthetic appreciations. You would, in fact, have no more right to expect your neighbour to share your ideals of conduct than to share your opinion as to the relative merits of classical and Wagnerian music, your choice among liqueurs, or your preferences in cigars.

[1] Throughout the present argument I assume that the judgment expressing the preference is one of approbation (*i.e.* that it involves the ideal elements of memory and anticipation, and the sense of the difference between actual and possible experience), and not one of mere liking (*i.e.* not one which merely records the felt pleasantness of present sense-experience). Prof. Sidgwick's argument against reducing the ethical judgment to one of approbation (*Methods of Ethics*, bk. i. chap. iii.) appears to me to confound these two very different things. But English psychology is only just beginning to see that ideas are something more than "revived" sensations.

Indeed we might go even further. Not only would you not be justified in expecting the rest of the world to share your ideals, but you would not even be entitled to construct for your own satisfaction a standard by which to judge of the relative worth of different ideals or different men. You could not even say, "Though I do not demand that you shall have the same ethical preferences and ideals as myself, I do regard you as an inferior being because you do not have them." Every set of preferences which a man honestly feels, every ideal which fairly represents the type of existence which would give any human being lasting satisfaction, would have just as much claim to existence and to respect as any other. Though you could intelligibly say of yourself, "I shall be a worse man if I play false to my deliberately chosen ideal," you could not say of one man as compared with another—if only both were equally honest in knowing their own minds—that he was better or worse, but only that he was different.

A theory of this kind has obviously the merit of candour and simplicity, but it is not hard to see that it could hardly be maintained in its native simplicity without leading to serious difficulties and contradictions. On at least two points of cardinal importance its fundamental assumption is open to grave and, as it seems to me, fatal criticism. Your theory of the absolute subjectivity of all ethical preferences, we may say, is neither more nor less than the thorough-going working out of the old doctrine that "there is no disputing about tastes"; with the entire truth of this proposition the ethical deductions you draw from it must stand or fall. But the principle itself, like most pieces of proverbial wisdom, contains at least as much error as truth. It is not true that there can be "no disputing about tastes" in the sense in which your application of the adage requires.

For, (1) even if we consider only those simple and elementary experiences which were apparently originally meant by the "tastes" of the proverb, and to which it is most applicable, the statement is only very partially true. You may indeed argue that so long as a "taste" is taken to mean no more than the degree of pleasurable emotion aroused by a single sensible quality, it is no more reasonable to have one taste than to have another. A man, you may say, cannot be called un-

reasonable because he dislikes tomatoes or cigars or whiskey, nor reasonable because he likes them. If I happen to like a colour or a musical effect[1] which you dislike, my preference in the matter is just as good for me as yours is for you, and neither of us is justified in assuming the superiority of his own taste.

An argument of this kind, however, overlooks two obvious considerations. (*a*) There are some tastes which are, to begin with, of such a kind that the permanent enjoyment of them is, under the general conditions of human life, difficult or impossible. It does not, after all, come to the same thing whether you like wholesome food and dislike poison, or whether you like poison and dislike food. The relish for wholesome and necessary food is an almost indispensable condition of a life of lasting and steady contentment; the taste for poisons, if indulged, must lead directly to suffering and death. The one taste not only may be, but must be, present and must be gratified if you are to enjoy life at all; the other cannot be enjoyed except at rare intervals, and at the cost of ultimate misery.

And (*b*) even in the case of those "tastes" of which the presence or absence has no appreciable effect upon the duration and efficiency of life, the man who possesses the "innocent" taste has at least the advantage over others of possessing one means the more towards a life of full and rich satisfaction. This is true even of so insignificant a taste as the liking for some cheap and abundant addition to the fare which is necessary for the support of life. Consider, for instance, the case of the man who happens to "like" tomatoes or artichokes. As against the man who is without these or similar tastes, he has all the advantage of being able, without expense or difficulty, to introduce increased variety into his daily fare. When one reflects upon the extent to which the permanent and efficient discharge of the duties and functions of life depends upon a relish for one's food, which in turn depends to some extent upon the power to give to one's diet the charm of variety, and to avoid the indifference which comes from the everlasting consumption of the same articles, it seems only reasonable to admit that the possession of the taste for

[1] Here, however, we are already passing out of the region of "simple" tastes.

tomatoes and other such harmless preferences may well assist to make life, on the whole, richer in steady and permanent satisfaction.

And when we pass to preferences of a more ideal kind, such as the "taste" for music or pictures, it becomes even more apparent that every additional preference of this kind affords added opportunities for a contented and efficient existence. As against the man who is simply devoid of any preferences except those which are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the physical organism, the man of many and varied "tastes" may justly claim that his life—even if neither longer nor physically healthier by reason of his "tastes"—is far the richer and fuller in sources of permanent satisfaction, and therefore, from the point of view of individual completeness, the worthier existence of the two. Unless we are prepared to deny the effect of paucity of interest and monotony of existence upon the general emotional tone of the vital series, we must assert that *de gustibus est disputandum.*

Again, (2) after all, the majority of cases where men differ in their preferences are not so simple as those we have been considering. A difference in artistic taste commonly means not so much a disagreement as to the pleasure-pain value of simple elementary sensation as a dispute about the degree of vigour, sincerity, and consistency with which certain principles as to which there is no essential difference have been carried out. If I cannot be told "you ought to prefer this simple tint to that," I cannot unreasonably be told "you ought to admire strong, sincere, and elevated work; you ought to turn unsatisfied away from tawdry colouring, bad drawing, vulgar sentimentalism, shallow theatricality." Here the "ought" seems to mean "you are logically bound, in consequence of principles the validity of which you do not and cannot deny, to prefer the work in which these principles find adequate and consistent expression to that which is constantly setting them at nought through ignorance, or through cheap straining after effect." Just as the more comprehensive experience of the man of many tastes must be pronounced—in virtue of its comprehensiveness—worthier than that of the man of few, so the experience which reveals itself in a system of connected and coherent preferences must—even from the most subjective

point of view—be pronounced worthier, in virtue of its very consistency and coherency, than that which is perpetually perplexed, hesitating, and self-contradictory.[1]

These considerations lose none of their force when the "tastes" in question are supposed to be concerned with matters of practice, and to be expressed in a system of ethical preferences. That system of moral preferences which indicates a more comprehensive or a more harmonious and ordered experience is so far worthier than that which springs from narrowness of intellectual range or confusion and contradiction of thought. The fact that some types of life are much more comprehensive than others, and the companion fact that some lives are such that it is impossible to live them out without either catastrophe or hyprocrisy, of themselves dispose of the doctrine which forbids us ever to make statements about the relative moral worth of different men.

On the other hand, the familiar Intuitionist views seem to err as much in the direction of exaggerating as the view just rejected does in that of depreciating the objective value of my system of ethical preferences. According to the Intuitionist view, I ought always to be able to generalise "I ought" into "you and he ought." But if we were right just now in contending that "I ought" ultimately means "I must, unless I am prepared to be false to my plan of life," it will at once appear that I cannot pass without further justification from "I ought" to "you ought." I ought to do this because it is a part of a general plan of life which, if realised, will provide due scope for my various energies, and thus give me the general satisfaction of my most persistent cravings and most eager anticipations. But what if there is no such relation between the act in question and the type of life which would in like manner employ your abilities and satisfy your needs? If, as we have said, obligation is primarily a *psychological* fact, what is meant by asserting the

[1] I may seem to have overlooked the not uncommon case of the consistent preference of vulgar and inferior work. This is, however, probably met by what has been said about the superior worthiness of the more comprehensive experience. That a man regularly and steadily expresses admiration of vulgar work in any branch of art means that he has not the "tastes" which give really fine work its meaning. The true work of art is in fact to him simply unmeaning. He has not that "experience of both pleasures" on which Plato lays such stress. To have experience of both would infallibly be to prefer the one and condemn the other.

existence of the fact when the psychological conditions by which it is created are absent?

To take a concrete case: a certain concession to appetite may for me be an act of treason against the objects to which my life has been devoted; in you the same indulgence may leave the attainment of the objects for which you are living untouched, or may even—conceivably—further them.[1] In that case can I say that "you ought" to abstain from the indulgence in the same sense of the words in which I say that "I ought"? Is it not the more logical as well as the more moral attitude to say, "This would be exceedingly wrong in me, but I cannot pronounce upon its rightness or wrongness for you"? If we are to go beyond such a statement with any confidence we must, I think, do so on the ground of special personal knowledge of the character and aims of the person with whom we are dealing, and not on the strength of the mere "universality" of moral judgments. I can see no way from the conclusion that the ethical judgment is primarily the expression of a subjective preference, and that the "universe" within which it is "universally" valid is primarily that of the experiences of a single individual.[2]

It must be carefully observed that the limitation thus placed upon the universality of the moral judgment in no way weakens its imperative force within the sphere where it is directly and properly applicable. If a certain act would amount for me to treason against everything for which I count it worth while to live, it is none the less imperatively forbidden to me because I may doubt how far it would involve similar disloyalty on the part of others. Nor does our doctrine, when rightly understood, assert without qualification that obligation ceases along with the consciousness of obligation, or that there is not some secondary sense in which I can intelligibly maintain that another man "ought" to recognise a duty which he actually ignores.

[1] *E.g.* You may make the indulgence of your lusts a stepping-stone to the realisation of your ambition, as Cleopatra perhaps did.

[2] It would be no answer to this contention to appeal to the influence, which we all admit, of social opinion in forming the individual's preference. For we are not now speaking of the origin but of the validity or scope of reference of the ethical judgment.

There are clearly two different senses in either of which I can say that you ought to admit an obligation which you profess not to recognise. You may, when formulating your system of approbations, overlook or even deny the existence in yourself of judgments of approval to which nevertheless your actions bear unmistakable witness; then I can at once say, "you ought to admit this obligation" in the sense that until you do so your statement of your own principles does not adequately correspond with the facts of your life. In this case "you ought" means "you must, if your theory is to correspond with your practice." Or again, I may be speaking of some judgment of approval which you neither recognise in theory nor conform with in practice, and I may mean to say that the conditions of a satisfactory life in general, or of the kind of life that would satisfy you in particular, are such as logically involve the approbation in question. Then I mean by "you ought," "you must unless you are prepared to play false to your own scheme of life."

Only in this case it is clear that my contention needs to be borne out by knowledge both of the general social environment and of the psychological peculiarities of the person I am addressing. Where there is a marked difference between us in racial characteristics, heredity, surroundings, or personal temperament, it becomes a matter of the greatest difficulty to infer from my own case what would or would not be moral treason to principle in some one else. I can with some confidence argue from my own duties to those of Englishmen of my own calling and social status; with less confidence and in fairly simple cases I may argue to those of Englishmen of a different class and profession; with still less confidence and in terms of still more generality I may reach some conclusions about the duties of other Europeans, but it would certainly be very difficult for me to make any but the most vague and general assertions as to what "ought to be" the ethical preferences of a Malay or a Chinaman. Their fundamental racial characteristics, the social organisation of which they are members, are so unlike anything that I know of myself and my fellow-countrymen that it would be the height of presumption in me to dogmatise about the type of life which

would on the whole afford them lasting satisfaction, and would find its expression in their system of ethical preferences.

In cases where such enormous differences between the fundamental psychological characteristics of individuals or races come into play, the assertion "you ought to choose as I do" takes on, as it seems to me, an entirely different meaning. It ceases to reflect a supposed psychological fact and becomes virtually a command. From one member of a social organisation to another "you ought" may reasonably be held to mean "I am sure you would find your account in this"; where it is addressed to individuals or classes standing upon an entirely different level of civilisation, or belonging to widely different types of civilisation, it can only be taken to mean, "adopt my system of preferences, or disappear." It is, in fact, simply the expression of my determination that my system of preferences and not yours shall prevail in the ceaseless competition for survival among moral ideals. If you are a Malay or a Chinaman I am no longer justified in arguing that a code of preferences which would be impossible for me may not be forced on you in virtue of your most fundamental psychological characteristics, or that the system which does correspond to my deepest needs would be so much as tolerable for you. So far, then, I cannot intelligibly assert that what is obligatory—in the strict psychological sense—for me is or could be obligatory for you. But I can, and if I am sufficiently imbued with the temper of a dominant race, very probably shall, resolve that I will *make* my system of preferences obligatory upon you by forcing you to choose between conformity to them and extermination.

This is, as it seems to me, the only intelligible sense in which it is possible to maintain the universality of all ethical imperatives as such. The imperatives in which my deepest convictions as to the kind of life which is satisfactory, and therefore rational, are expressed, are binding on me in the special sense that violation of them is treason to my deliberately adopted plan of life; I may fairly conclude that they are binding upon others in the same sense just in so far as others resemble me in psychological constitution and social environment. Outside these narrow limits the "universality" of the imperatives in which my preferences are expressed is in the

strictest sense of the word a "postulate" and not a psychological fact. It means neither more nor less than my determination to give to my preferences the "universality" which they do not at present possess, by confronting individuals and societies which do not share them with the choice between submission and extinction.

"The Koran or the sword" is only an epigrammatic way of describing the situation which arises whenever competing systems of preferences are brought into close quarters with one another. The wider the gulf between the two systems the less possible is it to make converts from the one to the other—as is abundantly illustrated by the history of the various missionary religions of the world. Where the difference between the systems of preferences is but slight, one of them may prevail by the speedy method of wholesale conversion; this has frequently been the case with Islam. It is precisely because the gulf between the moral and religious ideals of Islam and those of the tribes—African or Asiatic—which have embraced it is comparatively trifling that Islam more than any other religious system has been able to extend itself permanently by means of huge national conversions. Western Christianity, on the other hand, precisely because it has come in the course of centuries of elaboration to be a profound reflection of the fundamental needs of the Western peoples, is so alien to the basal psychological characteristics of Oriental peoples that its direct conversions are extraordinarily few, and its hopes lie, as would now be generally admitted by its most convinced champions, not in the conversion of the existing generation, but in the slow modification, by the all-permeating influence of education, of the racial character of peoples and the gradual evolution of generations with a new psychical constitution and new needs.

For the same reason it would be at least presumptuous to anticipate, on any grounds of reason as distinct from faith in a supernatural revelation, that the influence of Christianity, if it should ever be nominally embraced by an Oriental people, could be as profound or as permanent as that of systems which appear to us ethically inferior, but have the advantage of having developed entirely on Oriental soil, and thus of expressing without foreign accretions the fundamental peculiarities

of the Oriental character. If the whole world is ever to be converted to Christianity, one may conjecture that it will be by the gradual extinction of the vast majority of the existing races of mankind, and the reduction of all the present variety of psychological constitution to one or two types—such, for instance, as the Russian or the Anglo-Saxon. It is for a polemical purpose and as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Erastianism of Hobbes that Locke contrasts the propositions "you ought to do this" and "the leviathan will kill you if you do not do this;" but really, when addressed by the dominant Englishman to his Hindu or African subject, the assertion "you ought to adopt my code of ethics or my religion" is after all tantamount to some such threat. Only the leviathan of fact works in a more leisurely and less sensational fashion than the leviathan of philosophic fiction, and kills not by sword or rope so much as by the slower but more certain and more wholesale process of "civilisation."

In a word, the "universal laws" of the moralist may be for himself and for those like-minded with himself "laws" in the ordinary scientific sense—statements of fact as to the line of conduct in which he and they find their ultimate satisfaction and lasting peace; for all the rest of mankind they are laws as the positive commands of a ruler are laws—the "orders" of a superior who possesses the power to enforce his will, and will not fail to exercise it. "Thou shalt not steal" may mean for me "you cannot do it and be loyal to yourself"; when I repeat it to you it signifies, in the majority of cases, simply, "I will take care to the best of my power that you shall not do it, or if you do, I will in one way or another civilise you off the face of the earth."

It is a pleasing dream that "civilised morality" corresponds so universally to the felt needs of all mankind that all would find their account in it if they were wise enough to know their own wants; the fact is, it is one of *our* needs that "civilised morality" should reign supreme, and we satisfy that need by the endeavour to create a population which will find its account in the system. As for the dissentient outsiders, whom we are pleased to think we are "civilising," what we are really doing is by exterminating them to prepare the way for the creation of the future race that is to

share our ideals. Sometimes the extermination is effected by Maxim guns, sometimes by the maxims of the missionary and the schoolmaster. But in either case the principle is the same; our secret object, if we only knew it, is not to imbue existing communities with our ideals so much as to clear the way for the future creation of new communities in which those ideals may have the world-wide recognition without which *we* cannot rest contented.

It is probably indeed much more for our own satisfaction than because we believe them necessary to the satisfaction of the native population that we attempt to force our culture, our institutions, and our religion upon India or China. It is not the Hindu or the Chinaman, but we ourselves, who will "not be happy till" we get them. It is with profound philosophic insight that Nietzsche treats the moralist as an incarnation of the "will towards power," and describes him as a "creator of new values" and a "breaker of the old Tables." Or, at the risk of wearying the reader by the repetition of what is after all a very simple though a very important truth, we may say once more that the categorical character of the moral imperative represents, when rightly interpreted, the moralist's personal determination to create a society in which his preferences shall have the universal validity which at present belongs to few or none of them.[1]

I do not know whether these reflections upon the meaning of "obligation" and "validity" will meet with the reader's approval: to me the conclusion we have arrived at seems unavoidable so long as you accept our premisses, which were, that whatever is real must be in the last resort reducible to some fact or facts which fall within an actual experience. This, it will be remembered, was not only the principle assumed in our present discussion, but the fundamental assumption with which our whole examination of ethical facts started. The purport of the present discussion may therefore be said to be the elimination from our concepts of validity and obligation of the "symbolic" elements which in common usage they include, and the definition of them as far as possible in terms

[1] A visitor from another planet might smile at the conviction that western civilisation is worth perpetuating at the cost of exterminating all other types, but a western moralist can, after all, only say with Nietzsche's hero, "Da stehe ich schon als Europäer, ich kann nicht anders, Gott helfe mir!" Nietzsche, vi. 449.

of "pure" experience. Of the legitimacy of the use we have made of that principle the reader must be the judge, but we are at least entitled to point out that, if our deductions from it are legitimate, they can only be met by an assault on the principle itself. The attempt to reaffirm the "objective universality" of ethical imperatives by rhetorical appeals to "conscience" or "common sense" would in fact be as futile as the various attempts to meet Hume's analysis of "necessary connection" and "personal identity" with the same retort.

Our main philosophical contention is, indeed, identical with that of Hume; like him we have urged that in so far as a proposition is true it must directly or indirectly be a statement about *Erlebnisse*—things which either actually form the contents of an experience or would, under definitely known conditions, form the contents of an experience,[1] and that concepts which cannot stand the test of reduction to such a statement must contain a greater or less amount of "illusion of the mind." Where the "illusion of the mind" comes in in the case of the current ideas about the universality of ethical imperatives we have tried to show, I know not with what success. But it should in any case be clear that if we are to be refuted it must be by exhibiting defects in our analysis and not by the appeal to "common sense."

It is, indeed, the distinguishing mark of common sense to disregard all elements of illusion which do not affect the usefulness of an idea for immediate practical purposes; the man of common sense is he who, as Aristotle phrases it, does not expect "more accuracy than the case admits of." Now for the purposes of immediate practice it is quite sufficient for me to know that a given ethical obligation is imperatively binding upon myself, and that my ideal of life for myself and my society cannot be attained unless I am prepared to enforce it to the extent of my power upon my fellows. With this degree of categoricity and universality, then, full justice is done to the claims of practical common

[1] The two cases are, of course, ultimately reducible to one. Any statement as to what I should experience under conditions which are not actually realisable can be ultimately resolved into a series of statements about that which I experience under actual conditions. Thus "Venus has phases like the moon," only differs from, "if I could be placed upon the surface of Venus the earth would appear to me to have phases like the moon," by the greater directness of its reference to conditions which have been actually realised in experience.

sense. The further purely speculative question as to whether the ethical judgment can be called universal in a wider sense must be settled not by the off-hand verdict of "common sense" but by philosophical and psychological analysis.

Meanwhile two remarks may fairly be made in answer to the charge, which is likely to be brought against us, of treating moral obligation as a purely personal and subjective affair. (1) Our doctrine seems in any case to be no more than the logical statement of the familiar Protestant principle of the supremacy of conscience. For, on its positive side, our view simply says that for *me* there can be no court of appeal from the deliberate verdict of my own reason, properly informed as to material facts, upon the course of life which will satisfy my deepest and most permanent psychical needs. As against this deliberate verdict of reason, we say that neither the fact that my "duty" is unpleasant nor the fact that my neighbours feel themselves under no such obligation can be allowed for a moment to count. Whatever be the case with them, I at least have no right to indulge in enjoyment or forego exertion, nor, let me add, to indulge in exertion or forego enjoyment, at the cost of disloyalty to myself.

And, on the negative side, our theory says no more than is said by the religion which most of us profess to respect when it forbids us to judge our brother. We cannot, indeed, be fully in earnest with our own ethical ideals unless we are convinced that society, as well as ourselves, would lead a worthier life if it approximated more nearly to the realisation of them; hence all sincere moral action involves a "creation of new tables," an attempt to do our part towards uncreating the social fabric, in so far as it is inconsistent with our cherished ideals, and remoulding it "nearer to the heart's desire." Warfare, with ethical ideals which are opposed to our own, is thus an inevitable characteristic of all really sincere morality; but when we pass from the practical endeavour to create a society in which our ideals shall be paramount to the speculative assertion that existing communities, however far removed from ourselves by racial characteristics, "ought" to exchange their ideals for our own, we are exchanging the part of combatants for that of judges and arbitrators in our own cause. We are arrogating to ourselves a function that by

right belongs only to God and to history. Where one of the conflicting ideals is related to the other, as the more to the less harmonious or comprehensive, in *eodem genere*, this assumption of the judicial position may, as we have seen, be defended; where the fundamental differences are so great as to permit of no such comparison, modesty bids us admit that *θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας.*

What, then, are we that we should take it upon us to say that the world's life would finally be worthiest for the abolition of all ideals but one, and that one ours? How much more becoming our poor human estate, while we fight for the supremacy of the system of preferences which we think worthiest, to refrain from hasty assertions about its obligacy on others, and to leave the final judgment on its claims to world-wide dominion in the hands of time.[1] We may say, indeed, that our ideal is the only one which is fully in harmony with the facts of human nature and the direction of human progress. But we must not forget that there may be very different interpretations of the facts of human nature and of human progress, and that in deciding in favour of our own interpretation we are usurping the position of judges in our own cause.

(2) And, again, it is not moral truths only, but all truths which involve a subjective element which becomes more and more noticeable precisely in proportion as our truths become more far-reaching and more profound. In an ordinary judgment expressive of immediate sense-perceptions the subjective side commonly passes unnoticed, just because the subjective conditions upon which the validity of the judgment depends are so comparatively simple and easy of ascertainment that we do not think it necessary to remind ourselves of their existence. "Grass is green"—under normal conditions of illumination—to every one but the blind or the colour-blind; the limitations imposed by subjective conditions upon the universality of the judgment are so obvious that it is not necessary to refer to them, but they are not for that any the less real. Most men are sufficiently alike as regards colour

[1] "Vieler Edlen nämlich bedarf es, und vielerlei Edlen, dass es Adel gebe! Oder, wie ich einst im Gleichniss sprach: Das eben ist Göttlichkeit, dass es Götter, aber keinen Gott, giebt." Nietzsche, vi. 296.

perception, yet there always remains the 2 per cent, or whatever the proportion may be, who are "red-green blind," and the proposition "grass is green" is, therefore, strictly speaking, not of universal objective validity.

The simpler propositions of the physical sciences again stand on a very similar footing. The general subjective conditions which must be present, for instance, in order that the various steps of a simple chemical experiment, as described in a text-book of the subject, may be observed in my personal experience, are so few and so elementary that their presence may be assumed in practically any normally constituted human being. But even in the physical sciences this ceases to be the case as soon as you come to deal with statements involving protracted trains of highly specialised observations or experiments. The series of judgments, for instance, which would be required in order to set out at length in words the information pictorially conveyed by a drawing representing the appearance of a section of the spinal cord under the microscope, is, properly speaking, true only for one who has gone through that very special preliminary training which we call "learning to use" the microscope. Such a drawing would, in point of fact, be untrue if it were presented as corresponding to what I or any other observer without this special training might see, as we have already remarked in chap. i.

Still more markedly subjective, I apprehend, are the judgments in which a practised man of science might attempt to express his most fundamental convictions about the general nature of things, his *wissenschaftliche Weltanschauung*. That is something which is based not so much on this or that or the other series of investigations as upon the total character of his whole intellectual life, and I suppose we might fairly say, you could not really enter into the scientific man's full convictions about the truth even of the purely physical world by merely making yourself acquainted with his leading investigations or even by repeating them; to share his thought in the fullest sense you would have to have had his experience, to have lived yourself into his life.

Of our judgments upon matters which demand knowledge of the concrete facts of the mental order, this is even more

glaringly true. The statements of a comprehensive work on psychology, for instance, would only be fully true for a reader whose intellectual and emotional development had been very closely akin to that of the psychologist. For the writer's views on all questions affecting the higher and more complex forms of intellectual and emotional life derive all their value from the intensity of his own emotional and intellectual experiences; in this sphere, at any rate, no man can write with comprehension of what he has not lived through, and his highest truths will be true only for those who have lived through the same experiences.

So, again, every system of metaphysics or philosophy that is worth anything must be the sincere expression of intense individual life; a man's metaphysics, after all, may be said to be worthless unless they represent his special way of experiencing the Deity, and hence no metaphysic of value can ever be true to a student or disciple in the same way in which it was true to its author. For this very reason an intelligent critic of the great philosophers cannot but feel that even his most searching criticisms more than half miss the mark. What the most unanswerable criticism shatters is, after all, only the philosophical system as it is imperfectly conceived by disciples and antagonists, not the same system as it reflects the deepest characteristics of the master's intellectual life. It is impossible, for instance, not to feel that the "Hegelian philosophy" has never really existed since the death of Hegel. Neither to disciple nor to antagonist can the kaleidoscopic procession of categories in the Hegelian Logic be, what it manifestly was to Hegel, the natural and direct expression of the experiences of a rich personal intellectual and emotional life. One may, in a way, think one's self into them, but they remain at best a half-foreign framework into which our experiences have to be forced, a Procustean bed which is either too short or too long for every one but Procustes himself—in fact a kind of intellectual "cant."

Thus one may say that no philosophy can, in the fullest sense, be true for any one but its author, and further, that no philosophy that is worth having can be picked up by the mere reading of the works of philosophers. To study philosophy you

must yourself "philosophise." All and more than all that original work in the observatory or laboratory is to the study of physical science the possession of a strong and varied individual life, both intellectual and emotional, is to philosophy. In short, exactly as knowledge goes deeper and concerns itself more with the full concrete realities of our experience the more prominent does its subjective side become. The more abstract and superficial the results of your thinking the easier is it, and the more concrete and profound those results the harder is it to sever them from the rest of the individual experience of which they form a part.

It is with ethical judgments then precisely as it is with all thoughts; so long as they are no more than vague abstract generalities they may possess an almost equal validity for communities sundered from one another by wide differences of racial character and history, but the moment you give adequate expression in your ethical judgments to your own concrete ideal in life, you are *eo ipso* narrowing the space of their application. What is so true that it is equally true for everybody is at least not *the* truth for anybody. So far, at least, we may adopt as our own the adage about "tastes" which we have criticised unfavourably a few pages back. We may and must admit that in proportion as any system of judgments becomes an adequate expression of any experience it tends also to become the expression of an individual experience.

Much idle and acrimonious philosophical controversy might have been avoided if only philosophers and their critics alike had always borne this fact in mind as they ought. We should then indeed have heard less about "eternal and immutable morality," about "universal and necessary *a priori* judgments," and about the claims of contending systems to be the "absolute" philosophy; but, by way of compensation for this loss, we should have learned to comprehend the great philosophers more sympathetically as we realised that it is only by living, as far as possible, through their experiences, not by mere "external" reflections upon the advantages and the difficulties of their theories, that their full meaning has to be grasped. We should undoubtedly be worse partisans, worse Aristotelians, Kantians, Hegelians, if we pursued our philosophical studies in this spirit; but I am not so sure that we should not be

better philosophers or, if the name be thought too ambitious, better students of philosophy. To condense the drift of the argument into a sentence, we may say the only possible "proof" of a system of philosophy is to find your own experiences mirrored in its categories, the only "refutation" to have lived through them and to have found that experience is deeper and subtler than theory. And thus to be one's self a true philosopher one would need to have alike "proved" and "refuted" all the philosophies.

The last paragraph will not, I trust, be resented by the reader as having "nothing to do with Dionysus." If we have appeared for the moment to be wandering away from the question about the universal and objective validity of ethical intuitions into a general discussion of the nature of truth, our justification must be that it was impossible to set our doctrine of the personal and subjective character of moral judgments in its true light without reference to the all-pervading subjective element in other knowledge. There are further conclusions regarding the character and function in society of the "philosopher" and the true ideal of the "philosophic" life to which our investigation would easily conduct us, and which it would be interesting to examine if our space did not forbid the digression. As it is, we must content ourselves with barely hinting that our conception of the nature of truth in general and of philosophic truth in particular will probably be found to throw a flood of light upon much that, from the current point of view, appears strained and exaggerated in the estimate of philosophy formed by Plato and Aristotle.

For the immediate purposes of our own argument we have only to close this chapter by a recapitulation of the position we have tried to establish against popular Intuitionism. Thorough-going Intuitionism makes two assertions about the ethical judgment—that it is categorical and admits of no disobedience, and that it is universal and binding on every one alike. The former of these assertions we admit, only with the qualification on which we have laid so much stress in previous chapters, that it depends very much on the circumstances of the particular case what line of action is "categorically binding" upon me at any given moment. The second assertion we have been compelled in the main to deny—you cannot, we

have seen, argue from "I ought" to "he and she ought," except on the basis of special information as to the psychological constitution and social surroundings of the persons about whom we are arguing.

But to admit so much as this is also to admit that Intuitionism has no answer to our difficulties about the existence of contradictory aspects in the moral ideal. All that is left of Intuitionism, if our criticism be well founded, is the doctrine that you ought in any given case to act in the way that seems to you, on full examination of the facts, to be most in accord with your fundamental ethical preferences. Whether it is possible to have a system of preferences that does not involve at least the theoretical conflict between finally irreconcilable ideals is a question which Intuitionism leaves precisely where it found it. We are therefore justified in saying that, whatever may be the practical usefulness of the Intuitionist assumption as a guide to immediate action, it entirely fails to remove the difficulties under which a philosophic account of the ultimate character of moral conduct appears to labour. Whether by sufficiently widening our concept of the system to the good of which moral action conduces those difficulties can be made to disappear without our abandoning the peculiarly ethical standpoint—in a word, whether the strictly ethical experience can be made self-consistent—we proceed to discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOAL OF ETHICS

Trasumanar significar *per verba*
Non si poria; però l' esempio basti
A cui esperienza grazia serba.

DANTE.

WE have at the end of the last chapter found ourselves thrown back upon the old problem of the apparently insuperable duality of the moral ideal. In the present chapter we purpose to take up this problem once more, to ask how far and on what lines it is soluble within the limits of the ethical experience, and how far that experience would need to be modified in order to set it finally free from the taint of self-contradiction. The results to which our inquiry leads us will then be found to afford a transition from the merely ethical to a higher and more comprehensive type of experience. In attempting to free itself from its inherent inconsistencies morality will be found to transform itself into religion, and the change will necessitate the abandonment of certain concepts and categories, which we have seen to be of universal application within the limits of morality proper. The concluding chapter of our Essay will discuss the nature of these necessary modifications, and the relation of the type of religious experience in which our practical aspirations and emotions seem to find their final satisfaction to the intellectual experience of the man of science, as well as to the ideal of "pure" experience imagined by the metaphysician. The procedure of these chapters will necessarily be in the main critical—critical, that is, of the forms and categories of types of experience which we find as actually given in the life of ourselves and our fellow-men. Incidentally, however, if our methods and principles of criticism are just,

our examination ought to contribute some positive results to a constructive theory of both morality and religion.

We have, first of all, then, to consider and give our final answer to the question that has, in one form or another, been confronting us through the last two chapters. How far, and along what lines, is a consistent theory of the end of human action possible within the limits of ethical science? I must of course explain before going any further what I mean by the phrase "the limits of ethical science." The restriction will be best understood by a reference to the analysis of the ethical judgment which we attempted in our third chapter. We there decided that the most elementary ethical experience is one of disapproval or approval—one, that is, in which an idea of what might be is, with greater or less explicitness, compared and contrasted with what actually is. It was in the transition from "I like it" to "It is not so, but I should like it to be so," that we found the first crude beginnings of the moral life. And it was further implied in our discussion that the formation of systems of approving and disapproving judgments is materially conditioned by the fact that the approving individual is an integral member of some wider community of beings who, like himself, are capable of approbation and disapprobation, and that the expressed preferences of the individual and the rest of the community exercise a powerful reciprocal influence on one another. Now what I mean by strictly ethical experience, or experience within the limits of ethical science, is an experience which, to whatever degree of complexity it may have developed, has not transcended these initial conditions. It is characteristic, that is, of the ethical attitude towards the world that it never gets beyond the contrast of the actual and the possible. It is assumed in all practical morality that the aim of my conduct is to make real some state of things which as yet exists only in idea, and further, that the realisation of this "end" is to be brought about by the agency of myself[1] and other intelligent but finite and imperfect beings.

Reduced to its simplest elements this statement means—

[1] I need hardly say I attach no ulterior implications to the use of this word; "by the agency of myself" is, for us, only a shorter way of saying "as a result of movements on the part of myself."

from the psychological point of view,—that morality as such depends for its existence upon two fundamental peculiarities of human mental life,—the consciousness of time and the existence of ideas as distinct from both sensations and perceptions. Whether these two peculiarities are not ultimately reducible to one is a question which I do not at present feel competent to discuss, though it certainly looks at first sight as if the consciousness of time depended on the possession of ideas. Perhaps I ought to add that the "consciousness of time" here referred to as indispensable to morality means more than the apprehension of an empirical "present." It involves the recognition of certain stages in the process, part of which fills the "empirical present," as past and of others as yet to come. I am not contending in what follows that the contents of a "pure" experience would not occupy a sensible duration, but only that, if they do, the whole duration must be apprehended as we apprehend the duration of an "empirical present" (for which see L. T. Hobbouse, *The Theory of Knowledge*, p. 51, ff.). To adopt a distinction made by Spinoza in a letter to Ludwig Meyer, the existence of morality presupposes not only *duration* but *time*, *i.e.* duration considered in abstraction from the mode *quo a rebus aeternis fluit*, and known as embracing past and future as well as present.

Had the distinction of "present" and "future" no meaning for us, or again had we no conscious states understood as carrying a reference to an experience outside themselves, we should know nothing of good and bad, or right and wrong. We should live entirely in the present, enjoying and suffering, but never approving or blaming. On the other hand, if we could so transform our apprehension of the world as to bring it into harmony with the standard concept of a "pure" experience, we should *ipso facto* have got beyond morality. For with the attainment of an experience completely adequate to the whole content of reality, and absolutely concordant with itself, the ideal types of psychical life would be merged in direct intuition. Where a single experience embraced the whole system of reality there would be no opportunity for the "outward reference" or "interpretation" which is the special characteristic of the idea. In an ex-

perience that already contained everything without confusion and without contradiction nothing could possibly "stand for" anything else, for there would be nothing left to stand for. Hence the characteristically moral attitude of blaming and approving would find no place in such a pure or completed experience. And, in fact, we shall see in the next chapter that it is precisely in transcending these states of mind that the religious experience shows itself to be a step nearer the ideal of a "pure" experience than the "ethical."

Thus it would not be going too far to say that our moral life is in itself a consequence and a sign of the anomalous position of man in the universe, standing as he does "a little lower than God" and at the same time a good deal higher than the animals. Could we become either as the beasts which perish or as the gods which live for ever, the curtain might be rung down over the "tedious brief scene and very tragical mirth" of this our conflict between the desire of the heart and the achievement of the hand; but it is the secret alike of the tragedy and the mirth of our situation that man is doomed to oscillate everlastingly between two poles, the divine and the bestial, without ever quite rising to the one or sinking wholly to the other. For the Sisyphus of the creation existence is only another name for a prolonged struggle towards an ever-receding ideal,—a struggle which seems indeed to be transcended by certain types of experience, such as those of evangelical religion—only, however, to break out again at a higher level and with renewed intensity, as we shall see in our next chapter.

Any form of experience, then, in which the contrast between the ideal and the actual appears even for a moment as overcome lies outside the limits within which the conceptions of ethics are valid. All experiences, for instance, in which human successes and human failures are alike envisaged as integral constituents of a scheme which in its entirety is already perfect, or as the realisation of a divine will for which there is no distinction between the "is" and the "should be," must be regarded as being ultra-ethical. And any religious solution of the difficulties we have raised about the coherency of the moral ideal with itself must therefore be excluded from the scope of this chapter, in which we are concerned to discuss the

possibility of a solution which will not take us beyond the bounds of ethics, pure and simple. For the purpose of the present discussion we have to consider the discrepancy between our ideals and the facts of our situation as given and as demanding abolition by purely finite and human agency.

It will be clear from the whole tone of our previous argument that any reconciliation of the conflicting aspects of the ethical ideal which can be effected within the limits thus prescribed must, in our opinion, be merely approximate, or, as we have often insisted, any workable ethical theory must be at heart a compromise. It is conceivable, however, that, even within strictly ethical limits, there may be very different degrees of approximation to the comprehensiveness and self-consistency which we demand from an intelligible ideal, and it will therefore be one object of the present discussion to describe that moral ideal in which this approximation seems to be carried to the furthest possible point.

Previous discussions will have prepared us to anticipate that, upon the whole, the two requisites of harmoniousness and comprehensiveness are closely connected, and that, in general, where there is a want of comprehensiveness in the moral ideals of an individual or a community there will also be a lack of internal coherency, while, on the other hand, the most coherent type of civilisation will also be the most comprehensive, not perhaps as regards the mere number of the individuals who are admitted to share in its benefits, but as regards the variety of interests embraced and the degree of differentiation existing between the various individuals and sub-classes comprised within the community.[1] We are thus led to expect that a purely individualistic ethical aim will fall further short of the completeness and internal consistency which belong to every true ideal than one which embraces the whole population of a civilised community, and that the ethical activity which finds a sufficient scope for itself within the bounds of a single civilised community, will again be surpassed in both comprehensiveness and harmony by that which finds all limits other than those of a world-wide beneficence too narrow for itself.

In following out this line of thought a little further

[1] It is, in fact, this coincidence of harmony with comprehensiveness that affords the philosophical basis for Aristotle's attack upon the Communism of Plato.

into detail it will be necessary to note carefully that the "comprehensiveness" as well as the harmony of which we are speaking is as inseparable from the most exclusively egoistic as from the most extensively humanitarian ideal. It is, that is to say, not by the number of individuals affected but by the number and variety of the needs for which it provides satisfaction that we propose to judge of the comprehensiveness of a scheme of life, whether those needs be those of a single individual or of an entire community.

It is clear from the mere explanation of what we mean by comprehensiveness that it is neither necessarily proportionate to nor yet finally independent of the number of individuals included in the ideal.[1] It is true, on the other hand, no doubt, that the small city-states of Greece, resting as they did upon an industrial basis of slave-labour, provided the select circle of citizens with the opportunity of a culture more complete and many-sided as well as more thorough than that which the modern community can at present offer to the generality of its members; but it is also true that that very range and variety of interests within the citizen community which makes the gulf between the ideals and the achievements of modern civilisation so infinitely wider than in ancient days, carries with itself at least the possibility of a culture far more complex and comprehensive than any contemplated by the philosophers of Hellas. The fact that a member of one of our huge modern states has duties towards and ties connecting him with so great a variety of fellow men differing so enormously in character and interests, makes it much harder for him to live the life of harmonious and complete satisfaction than it could ever have been for the Greek, whose interests in life were bound up with those of a small number of persons closely resembling himself in physical and mental characteristics; but at the same time the very complexity and multiplicity of the interests to which these numerous ties and relations give rise would make the life of a man who succeded in effecting even a distant approximation to the ideal, infinitely richer and wider in every way than any

[1] This distinction between the comprehensiveness of an ideal of life and the mere *number* of the individuals it affects seems to be overlooked by many utilitarian moralists, notably by Prof. Sidgwick. For an example of the confusion, see *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 415, 416 (ed. v.).

life that could be lived with success in a small homogeneous slave-holding community.

And, for similar reasons, a really world-wide culture, unrestricted by the limits at present set to life by national prejudices and antipathies, though harder of achievement, would be, in its individual manifestations, more comprehensive than the most varied and comprehensive culture resting upon a merely national basis. In a word, the more complex the whole within which the individual is a unit, the more difficult of attainment, but at the same time the richer and more varied the possibilities of individual development presented to him. Even from the purely egoistic view, one stands to win more, though one's chance of winning the stake is probably less, under modern than under Hellenic conditions of life. Some sort of ethical relationship with numerous and diverse individuals seems the first pre-requisite of a really wide and varied personal culture. In this sense at least it is true even of the egoists of our modern world, that they receive but what they give. As Aristotle had already said, "Even if the good be one and the same for the individual and the city, it is a greater and more perfect achievement to secure or retain the good of the whole city. One must be content, then, if the good can be achieved for a single individual, but it is a noble and divine work to achieve it for a people or for cities."

We must bear in mind, then, throughout the following pages two facts, or rather the double aspects of what is at the bottom but a single fact: (1) that "comprehensiveness" reveals itself no less within the limits of the single life than in the organisation of the whole community, and (2) that even in criticising the egoistic ideal of life we are conceiving the egoist not as a solitary, but as so far at any rate a corporate member of a community, as to be able to avail himself of the resources accumulated and provided by the community for the purposes of his individual self-culture.

It has too often been forgotten by moralists of recent years that egoism is not refuted by merely pointing out the impossibility of living in utter isolation from one's fellows. The genuine egoist—by whom I mean the man with whom what Butler calls "cool self-love" is really the rule of life—is perhaps the last person likely to regard

the life of a Crusoe with admiration. For the attainment of a really high degree of egoistic self-culture one requires at least the services, if not the affection, of one's fellow-men as well as the co-operation of others who are pursuing the same ideal. Even the most narrowly individualistic and self-centred of collectors of antiquities or works of art finds some degree of community with others who are interested in the same pursuit, as well as some degree of social organisation sufficient to provide the machinery necessary for the discovery and purchase of his treasures, indispensable, and would hardly be willing to live in a world without brother-collectors or dealers in the antique. Even in his vices the egoist is not absolutely unsociable; there are few vices which it is possible to indulge in entire isolation from one's fellows, and as they are not considered particularly reputable even by the vicious, perhaps we had better say no more about them.

If, then, we are to pass an intelligent verdict upon egoism as a theory of life we must understand from the outset that our egoist is not banished, like the Crusoes and De Rougemonts of fiction, to an uninhabited island or a sand-spit, but is, like other men, a member of a civilised society, so far at least as to be able to use the organisation of that society as machinery for obtaining his objects, and presumably also so far as to include among those objects some degree of intercourse with other persons whose tastes are similar to his own. In the same way, in discussing the ultimate satisfactoriness of the life of wider benevolence or social service, we must constantly bear in mind that we are dealing not with the mere sentimental enthusiast for general humanitarian principles, which stand in no special relation to the needs and opportunities of any human society in particular, but with the man of practical insight as well as of generous impulses, whose schemes of benevolent activity are conditioned by and proportioned to the needs of an actually existing community, and capable of at least partial realisation by the aid of existing social machinery. We are, in fact, comparing the lives, not of the "God or beast" who exists apart from fellowship with his kind and of the citizen, but of the citizen who in the main treats civic fellowship with his kind as a means to his personal satisfactions, and of the other type of citizen who, at least to a large extent,

treats his own gifts and attainments as so much property held in trust for the benefit of his kind.

Let as begin, then, by asking how far a consistent account of the moral ideal is possible within the limits of an individual life. In a sense, of course, this limit is one which no ethical theory can transcend. Every ethical ideal, however exalted and far-reaching, remains primarily the ideal of an individual, the formula in which an individual finds the most coherent and adequate account of his own most deeply-rooted preferences. If, for instance, we were to decide for the ideal of a world-wide self-sacrificing benevolence as the most harmonious and comprehensive conceivable, it could only be ultimately on the ground of the harmony and comprehensiveness introduced by such an ideal into the aspirations and struggles of the *individuals* who adopt it.

But there still remains a striking practical difference between moral ideals which, like those of Aristotle or the Old Testament writers, are presented as being capable of fairly adequate attainment within the life of an average individual, and ideals like that of Christianity, which explicitly require the energies of the individual to be directed towards the securing of results which it is quite out of the question that he or even his "children's children" should live to enjoy. We are stating a common fact of experience when we say that current moral theories about the "progress" of the race habitually assume the possibility and the naturalness of a devotion to remote ideals which would in all probability have been unintelligible to a Greek or Hebrew moralist. This may conceivably be one reason for the contrast, upon which Schopenhauer has so vigorously insisted, between the optimism of the old and the pessimism of the new religion. It is comparatively easy to be optimistic about the realisation of your ideals when they do not extend further than seeing your "children's children and peace upon Israel;" it is quite another matter to feel the same confidence in the triumph of an ideal such as that which, first appearing in the later Judaism and passing from thence to Christianity, and so into modern thought generally, has come to include the establishment of a true civilisation and a satisfactory way of life, not for one or two generations or even for a single race, but for all mankind.

Or, to put the same thing in a way more consonant with our last chapter, we, who are committed to the struggle to confer upon our ideal of culture a world-wide validity, may reasonably feel more diffident about our chances of success than a Greek who was content with the prevalence of his ideal within the limits of his πόλις, or a Hebrew of the monarchy who felt no call to extend the "knowledge of the Lord" beyond the bounds of his own nation. The modern man is pessimistic as compared with his predecessors not so much from a sense of personal weakness or from ennui as because he pitches the note of civilisation and morality so exceedingly high.

We must not, however, allow ourselves to be drawn away into an historical digression, but must return to the point for the sake of which these remarks have been inserted. Our immediate object in making them is sufficiently attained by pointing out the vast increase in both comprehensiveness and ultimate self-consistency which is rendered possible by the advance from the comparatively narrow ideals of ancient to the far-reaching ideals of modern society. Such an advance can, in respect of the extent to which it enables us to escape apparent contradictions, only be compared with the advance made by physical science when it was ascertained that the sun is not, as even Copernicus had supposed, the centre of a finite and strictly symmetrical physical universe. There are moral phenomena—the missionary zeal of early Christendom for instance—which would be just as perplexing to a moralist whose outlook was confined within Aristotelian limits as the eccentric orbits of the comets or the parallax of the stars to a pure Copernican. Hence it is obviously proper for us, in our present discussion, to begin by looking at the relation between the moral ideal and the facts of life as it appears from the narrower or Aristotelian point of view, before we go on to see how far difficulties are removed or increased by the adoption of the more universal modern standpoint.

We ask then, first of all, Is it possible to frame a consistent theory of the moral ideal, under the restriction that the ideal be taken, as by the ancient world generally, to include nothing beyond what is—at least in possibility—attainable either in my own experience or in that of a

community of which I am, as a matter of experienced fact, a corporate member.[1] In putting the question in this form I am careful to insert, in the clause relating to the social environment, the qualifying words "as a matter of experienced fact," because it is upon this restriction that the whole distinction which we have drawn between ancient or Aristotelian and modern or Christian ethical ideals turns. It is of course possible for purposes of rhetoric to speak of a certain "solidarity of the race," and to describe every individual man as knit by some sort of invisible link to every other individual past, present, and future. And the man who succeeds in putting himself in practice at what we have called the Christian standpoint no doubt does to some extent feel a vague sense of this general human "solidarity;" but there still remains a vast difference between the relation thus established in thought between myself and the untold thousands of the dead or the yet unborn, and those relations in which I stand to members of actually existing social circles who are capable not merely of being made more or less happy in consequence of my actions, but of influencing my happiness in turn by their actions. Even that loose bond of a common civilisation, in virtue of which members of hostile European countries find themselves drawn close to one another in the midst of the barbarian or semi-barbarian surroundings of Morocco or Abyssinia, disguised as it is wont to be in ordinary circumstances by the feelings of national enmity or distrust, is a strong and real tie when compared with the links which bind a member of the present generation to a future which only exists for him in idea.

There are thus an indefinite number of intermediate stages between the closest self-identification with the fortunes of another and the completest indifference. With the mass of mankind that entire identification of the interests of another with the interests of self which the Gospel requires from

[1] With Aristotle even self-sacrifice is confined within these limits. For the only form of it which he recognises is that of exposure of my life and person on the battle-field. And it need not be said that throughout the Greek world such exposure on the part of the citizen is supposed to be undertaken solely on behalf of the existing citizen-community. A war undertaken not in the immediate interests of the community but for "an idea" would have been unintelligible to an average Greek. Still more unintelligible would he have found the self-devotion of a student of science who shortens his life by arduous or dangerous work in order to contribute to the knowledge of future generations.

every one who would do his duty by his "neighbour," seems hardly to exist except between the members of narrow social circles, based upon the primitive instincts of sexual and parental attachment. Devotion to the interests of one's town or one's local Church is again much commoner, and, except in moments of national peril, much more strongly operative as an ethical force than patriotism in the larger sense. It is only when special circumstances impress upon Englishmen the necessity of acting as one man that the Lancashireman really forgets the differences of character, speech, and habit which divide him from the Yorkshireman, or the Southerner his ingrained distaste for them both. And national antipathies again rarely allow the sentiment of a common brotherhood of civilised peoples, and a common interest in the extirpation of barbarism to make itself really operative in determining the course of events. While as for the still more universalistic sense of a common humanity to which the distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, is really unknown, it can scarcely be said as yet to exist at all, except perhaps among a few sentimental journalists and political orators, with whom it is more often than not little more than a pretext for ignoring the more immediate and pressing claims of civilisation as against barbarism. A man rarely talks of his own or his country's duty to humanity at large except when he is anxious to find some excuse for neglecting his duty to some narrower section of humanity in particular.

Nor is it altogether to be regretted that this should be the case. The sentimental wail over the narrow limitations of human sympathy and the ingrained selfishness of nations is no doubt only too often justified, but it also arises very frequently from failure to observe that the development of the human race towards real solidarity of feelings and interests is as yet only in its first beginnings, and must therefore for long enough to come remain below the point at which national aims and sympathies can be subordinated systematically to the sense of racial unity. A really operative, as distinguished from a speculative or Pecksniffian humanitarianism will only be possible when its psychological basis has been created by the final prevalence of some one type of social and moral ideal over its competitors. Until that result has been achieved it must remain the

general rule that the ethical aims and interests of the civilised man will in the main find their fullest realisation in devotion to a national or at best international, as opposed to a humanitarian, ideal. Instead of scolding or repining because the growth of a real psychological unity of the human race has not yet made ethical humanitarianism the rule instead of the exception, it would be more rational to see unmistakable signs of progress in the indications that, at any rate within the bounds of Western civilisation, a sentiment of international responsibility is steadily, if slowly, taking the place of a narrow and exclusive nationalism. It is some sign of moral progress if the doctrine of Hobbes and of some modern German theorists, that all independent states are still in the "condition of war," as regards one another, has come to be felt even by many of its supporters as a paradox in need of defence.

No delusion could well do more to obscure the real significance of changes like this, and to foster an unreasonable discontent with the rate of human progress towards an all-comprehensive ideal, than the notion which the first few generations of Christians left as a *damnosa hereditas* to their successors—the notion, I mean, that the world is in its decrepitude, and that we who are now carrying on its history are living on the verge of a final dissolution of all things. Little as even the most orthodox believers of the present day are prepared to grant the speculative truth of the propositions that "the night of time far surpasseth the day," and "the number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live," not the orthodox only, but many who would repudiate the name of Christian, habitually speak and write upon questions of moral progress and decline as if they implicitly accepted these statements. There is no better cure for an unfounded ethical pessimism than the correction of these millenarian dreams by quiet reflection upon the enormously extended prospect of human continuance held out by the calculations of a sober physical theory.

The application of the foregoing remarks will be fully apparent only when we come in the course of our argument to distinguish between the true ideal of a world-wide civilisation and certain current spurious imitations of it. Meanwhile they may at least serve to impress upon us the importance, in

discussing the Aristotelian ideal, of taking into account only the more immediate environment of the individual, the existing political and social bodies of which he is actually a member, and the immediately following generation of his kin, friends, and countrymen, to the exclusion of any wider corporation which, as far as the individual is concerned, only exists in ideal contemplation.

Restricting our consideration, then, at first within the narrow limits we have just fixed, we can easily see that there are two apparently insuperable obstacles to the realisation of a thoroughly comprehensive and harmonious moral life. We have, to begin with, to recognise the impossibility of ever finally removing the possibility of a deep-seated antagonism between the competing claims of fulness and harmony of individual satisfaction and social width or comprehensiveness. On the one hand, it is clear that the qualities of harmony and of comprehensiveness are, in some way, as we have already said, interdependent. To confine yourself entirely within a narrow circle of interest and sympathies is to close against yourself most of the avenues which lead to richness and variety of æsthetic and intellectual satisfaction. There are perhaps only two types of character for which harmoniousness and contentment of individual experience are permanently capable of reconciliation with the absence of broad and varied tastes and sympathies. One is the almost animal type which, so long as its primitive physical appetites are provided for by plenty of food and drink and frequent opportunities of sexual intercourse, feels no need of anything beyond these rather elementary gratifications to render life endurable or even happy. The other is the type of man in whom fanatical devotion to an idea or the mere routine work of a profession has killed all interests, ambitions, and tastes beyond those which find their satisfaction in the ceaseless round of monotonous labour.

With the former class—which, if one may judge from the frequency with which its existence is depicted in our popular resorts of amusement, is more numerous than those of us who do not, except in our least worthy moments, accept its standard of value would be inclined to suppose—ethics can hardly be said to be concerned. It is hardly possible, except in an ironical sense, to speak of an ultimate aim or an ethical end in

connection with a life which, under favourable material conditions, is almost as free from the experiences of dissatisfaction with the actual and endeavour towards the ideal as that of the ox or the swine. And with regard to the second class, it would probably be admitted, even by those who are least inclined to underrate the value of exclusive devotion to a single pursuit, that the singleness of aim which years commonly bring to lives of this kind has to be purchased at the cost of a self-mutilation which can only be morally justified, like all self-sacrifice, by the paramount worth of the causes in the service of which it is committed.

When one considers the effect of the individual's devotion upon the lives of a wider public, one may be prepared to admit that it is conceivably justifiable to incur intellectual and æsthetic atrophy in the interests of one's family or one's country or one's Church; but it still remains the fact that the individual life, considered in itself, is the poorer and the less worthy for the sacrifice. It may be necessary that a certain number of persons should become mentally eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake, but one would prefer not to be called one's self to that vocation, and would regard any decrease in the necessity for such victims as a favourable indication for the moral progress of society.

In general, then, and for all but the abnormal few, we may say that harmony and content presuppose variety of interests and comprehensiveness of aim; the man of one-sided overdevelopment is commonly also the dissatisfied man. Thus, on the one hand, harmony of individual experience seems to depend upon range and width; on the other, that very variety and multitude of ties and interests upon which the possibility of a truly harmonious and contented self-development depends carries along with it the possibility of violent collision between the ideals of harmonious contentment and of comprehensive activity—the claims of self and the claims of others. You cannot be a successful egoist without living in cordial relations with numerous social groups, and every one of these relations may serve as the foundation of interests and preferences which will sooner or later conflict with the attainment of the egoistic ideal.

Or we may state the same fact from the opposite point of

view thus: On the one hand, the moral and intellectual progress of society consists in nothing but the gradual substitution of aims and interests in which an ever-increasing number of individuals alike find their account for aims and objects which inevitably set one individual in opposition to others. The position of a society on the scale of civilisation may be gauged by the extent to which the objects permanently desired by its members as sources of satisfaction are of such a kind that they can only be enjoyed by one member on the condition of being also enjoyed by others. The state of barbarism has very properly been called by Hobbes a "state of war," for the very reason that the only sources of satisfaction available to humanity in that stage of its development are material objects of which it is roughly true that they can only be enjoyed by me on condition that I exclude you from enjoying them. In a state of perfect civilisation, on the other hand, each man would, as the saying goes, be "as God" to every man, because each would find his highest satisfactions not in the enjoyment of material comfort, but in the treasures of knowledge and art and social affection, which not only can but must be enjoyed by many if they are to be adequately enjoyed by one. And the real source of Hobbes' political fallacies lies in his failure to appreciate the extent to which, even in a very imperfect civilisation, goods of this latter kind, which can only be brought into existence by the co-operation of many towards a satisfaction in which they are all partakers, take the place of the material objects which minister to the direct gratification of "natural lust" as the principal end of human endeavour.

Thus there is clearly a sense in which we may, consistently with our general ethical principles, admit that progress in civilisation is essentially progress in the capacity for "altruism." Yet, on the other hand, it has surely been made sufficiently clear in previous chapters that progress towards an all-inclusive ideal of culture brings with it increased possibilities of violent conflict between the social or all-comprehending aspect of the moral ideal, and its other aspect as the full and harmonious development of the individual's nature. How inevitable this result is will easily be seen when we remember that everything which tends to idealise and

deepen the meaning of life while helping, as we have seen, to transfer value from material objects, which can only be enjoyed by an exclusive owner, to objects appealing to intellectual and æsthetic tastes, which can only be adequately cultivated where they are shared by a multitude of co-operating individuals, tends, at the same time, by giving a deeper significance to certain objects which were originally valuable only as sources of physical enjoyment, to enhance the value set upon their exclusive possession.

This may be illustrated by reference to the effect of intellectual and social progress upon the passion of sexual love. Take, for instance, the case already referred to in an earlier chapter of Achilles and Briseis. Achilles' wrath for the loss of Briseis, as we all learned at school, caused ten thousand woes to the Achæans; but yet Briseis is to Achilles little more than a valuable asset, possessing the power of giving him certain mainly physical gratifications. Hence the loss of Briseis is, after all, one that can conceivably be compensated if Achilles is presented with another piece of property of similar kind and equal physical attractions. His anger is much more for the affront involved in depriving him of his "γέρας" than for irreparable injury done to his personal affections. Hence the poet clearly feels and means his readers to feel that Achilles' repudiation of the offered reparation is the act of a man incensed by a slight on his sense of self-importance to the point of unreasonableness.

Now contrast with the state of mind of Achilles that of a modern hero to whom a similar wrong has been done. To set the point I am trying to illustrate in the strongest possible relief, I will imagine the case of a character like the Tristan of Wagner—a character, that is, in which the sexual possession of a beloved person has taken on and annexed to itself all the deepest and most ecstatic emotions of æsthetic and religious union and incorporation with the highest ideals. It is manifest that the mental and moral chaos wrought by a high-handed act of rape in the second case would be infinitely beyond that caused in the first case. Agamemnon might, with some hope of success, offer to give Achilles one of his daughters in lieu of Briseis; but no one could, without making himself ridiculuous, suggest that Tristan should be compensated for

the loss of Isolde by the presentation, say, of Brangäne. And without imagining the extreme case of a Tristan, who might after all be said to be an inspired erotomaniac, it is easy to see that the idealising and refining process through which the sexual passion has passed in the course of civilisation has at the same time enormously intensified the value set by the ordinary lover upon the exclusive possession of his beloved, and thus served to intensify the bitterness, if to lessen the frequency, of the conflict between love and public duty.

And what is true of the special case discussed above is no less true of all analogous cases. Consider, for instance, the value which the leisure and the material objects necessary for the cultivation of æsthetic or scientific tastes have come to possess for the civilised man. It is true, as we have just been urging, that the acquisition of these tastes has done much to make the individual less narrowly self-centred, by engaging him in pursuits which have to be prosecuted not at the cost of his fellows, but in co-operation with them; but at the same time, every step in development which has extended the area or multiplied the number of such tastes has, by enhancing the value to the individual of the life of scientific and artistic leisure, made it the harder for him, on occasion, to renounce these enjoyments in order to give himself to a career of self-sacrificing public service. In a word, the very civilisation which, by making the individual self more inclusive, diminishes the frequency of the collision of the claims of self and other selves, also by making the individual self richer and fuller of worth, increases the intensity and bitterness of the collision, and multiplies the mischief wrought by it in the cases where it does occur.

The utmost we could hope from further moral progress in this respect, then, would seem to be that it should still further decrease the frequency of these collisions, and should, moreover, furnish the individual with the moral strength requisite for preserving his integrity of purpose when they come upon him. To expect the actual abolition of the internal conflict by the passage of mankind in general into a state in which every individual would, on all occasions, instinctively find his own most harmonious self-development in the course of action beneficial to society at large, would be to expect a psychological

impossibility. We are thus compelled to believe that the possibility of those collisions within the individual experience between the ideal of comprehensiveness and the ideal of harmony, which are popularly known as conflicts between the claims of self and the claims of society, is no mere separable accident of certain stages of human development, but a necessary consequence of the peculiar psychological relation between the ideals themselves.[1]

So far we have only restated in somewhat more detail results at which we had already arrived. But a still more serious difficulty now awaits our examination. We have to ask whether there are not features in the moral ideal, which, even apart from the questions of the conflict of the individual with society, render an adequate formulation of it under what we have called "Aristotelian" conditions an impossibility. The difficulty in question may be briefly expressed thus: Make your account of the ethical ideal which you propose for realisation within your own experience and that of your own immediate circle adequate, and you will find your ideal has *ipso facto* become unrealisable under the given conditions; content yourself with a statement of what *is* realisable, and you will find that, as an account of an ideal, it is most deplorably low and inadequate. For the sake of giving point and emphasis to the more detailed treatment of this difficulty, I propose to throw what I have to say upon it into the form of an antinomy. The thesis of this antinomy may be briefly given as "my ethical end must at least be capable of attainment," and the antithesis as "my end, just because it is an *ethical* end, must be incapable of attainment." I will take the two sides of this antinomy and state them as forcibly and at the same time as accurately as I can in turn.

A. *Thesis: My end must be capable of attainment.*—This seems indeed so obvious as hardly to need stating. For what

[1] The foregoing arguments receive a striking illustration in the contrast between the peacefulness of the true savage and the combativeness of the barbarian or the civilised man. Savages, such as the Australian aborigines, are rarely at war with one another, for the simple reason that they have nothing worth fighting about. As soon as men cease to live from hand to mouth on the gifts of nature, and become regular herdsmen and settled tillers of the soil, the spirit of aggrandisement and conquest emerges, the barbarian tribe extending itself and its power at the expense of its savage neighbours. Thus, without civilisation there can be no true development of the possibilities of genuine social life, and yet every advance in civilisation adds to the number of objects and interests over which men are ready to come into conflict.

else is it that distinguishes a true practical ideal from mere mischievous chimeras but that the latter cannot be realised and the former can? And what, again, do we mean by such phrases as "the blessed life," "the good," and so forth, but a concrete experience in which a system of preferences obtains actualisation? Why, for instance, do we assert to the proof that the "greatest possible sum of pleasure" cannot be "the good" or "the end" unless it is because the greatest sum of pleasure is an ideal which is, in its own nature, incapable of being attained? Or why do we all agree, for practical purposes, to take "my station and its duties" as equivalent to the ideal if not because the system of preferences connected with my social station is something capable of realisation by my individual effort and within my individual experience? Here, in fact, in the difference between the realisable and the unrealisable, we have the true dividing line between the ultimately worthy and the fantastic and ultimately worthless. We may leave it to the dreamer and the sentimentalist to expatiate upon the beauties of an infinitely distant ideal: what we need as men, to render life harmonious and contented and rich in every kind of worth, is an experience so adapted to the concrete facts of our human nature and our terrestrial environment as to be capable of being enjoyed here and now. We are driven, as we contemplate the waste of human energy produced by devotion to purely fantastic ideals of conduct, to ask, in the words of Rabbi Hillel, "If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if not now, when?" And, in the words of Aristotle, we must insist that the only "good" which it steads us as men to know and to follow must be one which is *πρακτὸν καὶ κτητὸν ἀνθρώπῳ*.

For, indeed, whence does the whole system of morality spring, and whence does the whole struggle with the facts of our actual situation take its rise, except from the deep-seated desire for an experience richer and contented than that which is as yet ours? And hence, unless the good or the end is something which can be won and enjoyed within the limits of the individual's life, man must be doomed from his cradle to hopeless disappointment and irremediable failure. The "infinitely distant" ideal of the sentimentalist is, by definition, one to which you can make no sensible approximation, and

his assertion of its "infinite" inaccessibility is therefore equivalent to an assertion that no one can hope to make any progress towards a better moral character or a truer happiness. At the end of a life of "laborious days" you are, on the sentimentalist theory, no nearer your goal than at its beginning; and why, then, we may ask, all this labour of self-repression, and inward self-torture and conflict? Surely it would have been more amusing and not more unprofitable to have remained at one's ease "with Amaryllis in the shade."

To drop all this covert allusiveness and put the problem in its plainest form, why, I may ask, should I ever do anything except what I happen for the moment to like, if nothing that I can do will bring me appreciably nearer to my ideal of contented experience than I am at present? If you are bound to fall equally short of the "heart's desire" whatever you do, surely it is only reasonable to fail in the way which happens at any given time to be the most agreeable. And, on the other hand, before I can ask a man to do what is disagreeable I am surely bound in reason to give him ground to think that the disagreeable exertion or self-denial will most likely result in the achievement of some kind of experience for himself, or others in whom he is interested, which he believes to be worth having. If there is no reason to believe that our exertions will be actually crowned with success, how can you justify them except upon principles which lead to the glorification of drudgery and pain for their own sake?

Thus the theory of an "infinitely distant" ideal, if you take it seriously, so far from elevating and purifying morality, makes all moral action unmeaning and worthless. It asserts that the moral struggle is obligatory on account of the "ends" for which it makes, and then in the same breath declares that these "ends" are as far off at the end of our secular struggle as at its beginning. And the mischievous effects of devotion to so perverse an ethical doctrine are not mere matters of theory: history, especially the history of the religious life of individuals and nations, is only too eloquent as to the stagnation of intellect, the indifference to pressing and practical human needs, the carelessness of real human happiness and misery, to which this unreasoning adoption of ideals out of all

relation to actual human life under definite terrestrial surroundings has invariably led.[1]

But, we may rejoin, it is not the fact that the ideal aimed at in our moral struggle is anything impalpable or infinitely remote. The ideal is the practical one, not of an imaginary perfection out of all relation to our special situation in the universe, but of an harmonious, peaceful, and satisfied human life under the general conditions of terrestrial existence, and even the more special conditions of our position as members of this, that, or the other community, inhabiting a definite portion of the earth's surface amid definite climatic and topographical surroundings, and possessed of definite psychological characteristics and definite traditions and institutions. Our ethical preferences, as we have sufficiently seen already, are in their origin and nature throughout conditioned by all these circumstances, and the ideal of peaceful and satisfied existence which they embody is inevitably conditioned in the same way. It is contented human life, under definite conditions and in definite relations, that we are seeking in all our conflicts with the forces of nature, the social environment, and our own inconsistent and disturbing passions. Hence it results from the very nature and origin of our ethical ideal that it must be *κτητὸν ἀνθρώπῳ* and even *τῷδε τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ*.[2]

And failure, therefore, when once the ethical ideal is rightly conceived, may be seen to be the exception and not the rule. There are, of course, natures so unhappily constituted

[1] I purposely abstain from complicating the question by the introduction of the idea of a future life in which the claims of the "infinitely distant" ideal may be adjusted to the requirements of human nature. The positive evidence for a "future life" appears hardly sufficient to justify our resorting to the conception as a way out of our ethical difficulties. In any case, we should have to form our notions of the conditions of existence in another life in accordance with what seem to be the laws of nature in the present. And I cannot therefore see why failure should not be as prominent a feature of the future life as it is of our present existence. Indeed an endless future life would seem to offer at least as great a probability of infinite failure and misery as of infinite success and happiness. Any arguments for the existence of "heaven" seem equally valid as a proof of the existence of "hell." To suppose, after the fashion of the sentimentalist, that infinite happiness may be brought about in another life not by our individual exertions, but by the agency of the Deity *ab extra*, is only to appeal to miracle—or, in other words, to our own ignorance. For, if we can learn anything from the facts of life as at present known to us about the "purposes of the Deity," human failure seems to be not incompatible with those purposes, and if we cannot, we obviously have no grounds for making any assertions about what He may do *hereafter*.

[2] It must be remembered, of course, that all this is but the thesis of an antinomy, and that the other side has yet to be heard.

that they can attain no internal consistency in their system of preferences—natures which throughout their existence are rent in two by the conflict of quite irreconcilable desires and passions. For such unhappy "sports" of the human species life may perhaps be what one of them has called it, "le sinistre miroir Où la mégère se regarde." And there are others, again, more normally constituted, who fail to attain a contented and peaceful existence, either because the accidents of their social position compel them to earn the physical necessaries of existence by a drudgery which leaves no scope for the free realisation of their preferences, or because their life is cut short before they have attained to years of maturity and self-mastery. Hence with Aristotle we must qualify the statement that the ethical ideal is something which can be "achieved and enjoyed by men" by the reflection that a *βίος τέλειος*, a life of normal length and reasonable freedom from the pressure of material wants, is requisite for achieving and enjoying it.

But, within these limits, which after all only exclude a small minority of any well ordered community, and moreover seem clearly capable of being made to exclude a still fewer number by the serious application of organised human knowledge to the improvement of man's estate, what we really desire and aim at is something which can be and is enjoyed here and now. It is not true, as a matter of fact, that the ethical ideal, the attainment of which would bring us contentment and happiness, is something intangible and remote, and only to be possessed, if at all, at some point of infinite future time which recedes indefinitely on every attempt to reach it. And it is therefore false that moral failure is the law of human life. The collective experience of mankind, apart from the exceptional few already referred to, is, that under normal circumstances loyalty to ethical conviction, honest moral endeavour, does culminate in peace and contentment of mind.

When we ask ourselves what it is we really need in order to live at peace with ourselves and our neighbours, we shall find that all we desire has been provided for in the comprehensive formula of Spinoza that the "blessed" life means, (1) knowledge of the causes of things, (2) mastery of our passions, (3) sound physical health. And there is not one of these three things but may be in a high measure attained by all

but the most abnormal or unfortunate members of the civilised community. Or if we fail in any of them the fault will commonly be found, on honest inspection, to lie in our own weakness or indolence, and not in the character of the moral ideal itself. Popular ethical wisdom is at least so far justified in its assertion that while we cannot all be great or rich we can all be "good." *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna;* fill your place in the civic or social order into which you have been born; learn to control and subdue the unruly element, "the many-headed beast" within yourself; avail yourself of the opportunities which lie ready to hand of knowing something of the world and your position in it, and you will find that the life of inner harmony and content may be enjoyed without waiting to become in some extra-mundane Paradise "as the angels of God in heaven." Your ideal and the possibility of its realisation spring from a common source.

B. *Antithesis: My end, in so far as it is an ethical end at all, is in its very nature incapable of attainment.*—For the purposes of this antithesis we need do little more than develop the significence of certain admissions which have already been made in the proof of the thesis. What, we ask once more, were the ingredients which we found involved in any comprehensive account of the "good" of which the enjoyment would permanently satisfy us? Even when we were attempting, by making our demands upon existence as modest as possible, to show that real happiness is attainable in a finite terrestrial life, we were constrained with Spinoza to include in our estimate of the "good" at least three elements: (1) true knowledge, (2) self-mastery, and (3) "health" in the widest possible sense of the word. Now, which of all these three can be secured in any appreciable degree under the conditions of a finite human life?

If we take knowledge into consideration first, have we not already seen that every puzzle solved gives rise to a multitude of unsolved ones, and that the utmost we can hope from a life of threescore years and ten devoted to the quest of truth at all costs, would be the late discovery that we have sacrificed love and leisure and social culture and physical vigour only to become rather more clearly aware than most men of the extent of our own ignorance? *Res per primas suas causas intelligere*

is a little word and easily said, but the task it commands is one that would require a life of indefinite duration and almost inconceivable abundance in opportunities and conveniences for study. To a being whose brief span of existence is hardly long enough to allow him to do more than "just to look about him and to die," the very summons to so vast an enterprise must needs sound like bitter irony. What time or what opportunity have I, he might reasonably ask, to learn to understand so much as one thing *per primam suam causam* in the seventy years or so which is all the life allowed me? Certain it is that, if I turn to the so-called "inductive" sciences, I may devote my whole existence to the accumulation of knowledge, and yet be at the end as far from knowing "first causes," or even from understanding what a "first cause" is, as I was when I began. Metaphysics, supposing that there really is such a science, seems to offer a better chance of reaching the Spinozistic ideal; but even metaphysics, on closer examination, proves able at the very most to do no more than indicate in the vaguest way the formal outlines of a system the contents of which can only be known, in so far as they can be known at all, by reference to the other sciences. Where, then, in defect of some authoritative "divine word," am I to turn if I would find the knowledge of which Spinoza assures me that in it is comprised my true happiness and beatitude?

And, if the conditions of finite existence render the realisation of Spinoza's first condition impossible, what value is left to the other two? Self-mastery after all, considered in itself, is something purely negative and worthless. So far as it is of ethical value, it derives all its worth from the native worth of the positive ideals which it is the negative condition of realising.[1] If there were any hope of acquiring before I die the knowledge of things *per primas suas causas*, for instance, I might not grudge the intellectual and moral

[1] And hence, it might be fairly argued, the Spinozistic and Platonist phraseology about self-mastery fails, because of its negative character, to represent the facts adequately. It is not the repression of the "passions" so much as the full indulgence of a supreme passion that we need to make us happy. A life like Spinoza's appears "passionless" to most men only because they are indifferent to the things for which Spinoza passionately cared. Nietzsche has done yeoman's service in protesting against the popular mistake of regarding the life of the truth-seeker as one of "passionless" speculation.

discipline entailed by the life of thought and science. It might perhaps be worth while to stifle many tastes and impulses, to grow gradually dead to the life of the affections and the æsthetic perceptions, to be voluntarily ignorant of much that common men know and much that I should myself like to know, if only there were valid grounds for believing that this weary discipline of self-denial would some day have its reward in the attainment of a final and satisfactory answer to my scientific and philosophic difficulties. If I felt reasonably sure of knowing some day "what God and man is," I should hardly complain of the price I had to pay for the information. Like Odin, I might be willing to pawn my right eye for a draught from the well of wisdom. But I shall scarcely be inclined to give my eye for the knowledge of my own ignorance. If the sole result of years of self-repression and self-discipline should be the discovery that I am no nearer the truth about things than I was when I set out on my career, disgust at the fruitlessness of my acts of denial and privation is more likely to be my final state of mind than "beatitude" or contentment.

And as for the *sano corpore vivere*, it again is, no doubt, an indispensable condition of permanent content; but even supposing it were more in our own power and less a matter of accident and good fortune than it is, health by itself is no satisfactory end for which to live.

Nor do these reflections apply only to the Spinozistic conception of the "good." We are in fact confronted by the following dilemma: If you make the "end" to consist in nothing more than a certain amount of self-control plus a certain degree of material comfort, you are confusing mere preliminary conditions of the successful moral life with success itself. If you make the "end" any ideal of permanent satisfaction for our desire for knowledge or for æsthetic gratification or for social amelioration, it at once becomes unattainable within the limits of an individual life on earth. It is vain, as Aristotle long ago said, to tell men to "limit their aspirations to mortal things" (*ἀνθρώπινα φρονεῖν*), or in other words, to have none but ideals of a materially comfortable existence for themselves and their nearest connections; but if, on the other hand, you join him in bidding them "live the

eternal life," you are explicitly recognising that infinite inaccessibility of the ethical end which our thesis denied.

Thus we may say any end that is to be permanently felt as worth striving for must be infinite, and therefore infinitely remote, while any end that is infinite is *eo epso* out of reach of attainment, and as far from us after a life of devotion to it as it was at first. Or, if you prefer to make a direct appeal to concrete experience, can you doubt that the collective wisdom of mankind has long ago discovered that our ideals, whether of sensual gratification or of knowledge, or of beauty or of moral improvement, are, one and all of them, unattainable? So that, if indifference to the demand for a practicable ideal be, as the thesis urged, the mark of a dreamer or a fanatic, contentment with a finite and practicable ideal is no less undeniably the mark of an *esprit borné.*

Hence there is a sense in which it is true to say that the moral life is, from the very nature of the case, a life of struggle and failure, of weariness and vexation of spirit. I suppose there is no reflecting man who has not at one time or another felt a sort of intellectual rage at the contemplation of the internal contradiction to which we seem to be damned from our cradles. For the moral life must, at times at least, present itself to any serious reflection in the light of a kingdom divided hopelessly against itself. As moral beings we can never exist without some still unreached ideal to serve as a spur to our activity—can never, like Faust, rest on our oars and say to the present, "Be thou my eternity"; yet even when most irresistibly hurried forward in the chase of our distant ideal, we know quite well in our hearts that we shall only approach it to see it recede still further away from us. As I have written elsewhere, "Our attitude towards the objects in which we seek content is too much like that of the Flying Dutchman with his wives. The thing awakens desire, and with it the hope that this time fruition will be unchanging. We embrace the new interest with enthusiasm, and for a while we dream that here at last is something that will prove permanently true, but it is generally not very long before we find it is only the same old tale of deception, and mistake, and trust betrayed, and the restless search for a really final spring of happiness has to begin over again."

And even with a life of unending duration the same difficulty would arise. To the question, "When, then, shall I really put my hand upon happiness," we should have to reply, "Never, or this very moment upon the clock." In so far as a given moment realises our ideal at all, we cannot but wish it to be eternal, and again, in so far as no moment realises it except imperfectly, we are impelled to wish every moment past. Or, as Nietzsche expresses it, "Weh spricht Vergeh! Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit." And so long as we remain men, whose lives never contract within the compass of a moment nor expand till they embrace a real eternity—so long that is, as we neither sink to the level of the beasts nor rise to that of gods, —this condition of everlasting dissatisfaction with the present, this restless alternation between the desire of annihilation and the desire of eternity, is not to be escaped from. The knowledge of good and evil, in which, according to a singularly profound myth, our history as human beings began, is its own punishment apart from any supernatural curse laid upon its acquisition. And there is thus, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, deep philosophic wisdom in the thought that the essential mission of religion in the world is to redress the havoc which the knowledge of good and evil has wrought.

Meanwhile, so long as we are concerned with ethical experiences pure and simple, we seem forced to the conclusion that the unending struggle to realise an ideal which recedes as it is approached—the internal conflict between the good which we never quite attain and the evil from which we never get quite free—is of the very essence of morality. In fact the struggle is morality. Until you are embarked fairly upon it you cannot be called except *in posse* a moral being, and if you could once pass beyond it you would in doing so have passed beyond the limits of morality into a region of experience lying "beyond good and bad." This is why morality, apart from the transforming effect of the religious and ultra-ethical ideas which we shall have to describe in the next chapter, has always been found so wearisome a burden to the spirit as well as to the flesh of the most moral of men. As it stands before its transfiguration into religion, any morality that pitches its demands sufficiently high to awake any response of enthusiasm is but another name for the eternal recurrence of the experience of struggle and

failure and remorse and struggle again. It is in itself a wheel of Ixion, a "worm that dieth not and a fire that is not quenched,"—an instrument of torment which the self-torturer experiences as part of himself, and from which he could only get free on condition of becoming also free from himself. It is the unending and tormenting contradiction of which the Apostle speaks between the "law of God" and the rebellious "law in my members," the undying tyrant of whom the poet says, "de son empire Si nos efforts te délivraient, Tes baisers ressusciteraient Le cadavre de ton vampire."[1]

For the experience of internal discord and contradiction is more even than the "atmosphere" of morality; it is ourselves, the very core and heart of our being in so far as we remain permantly at the ethical level of existence. We are ourselves this living contradiction, this spiritual Hermaphroditus, condemned by our duplicity of nature to eternal quest after satisfaction ending in eternal failure and disappointment. If, we might even say, *per impossibile*, you could ever really reach and be one with your ethical ideal without ceasing in the moment of attainment to be human, you would at once create a newer and remoter ideal to be a source of torment instead of the one from which you had just escaped. For *c'est tout mon sang, ce poison noir*.[2] The distant ideal is the source of our direst mental tortures, and yet without it existence would be unendurable. So much then in defence of the antithesis of our antinomy.

What is in reality the same antinomy as that which has just engaged our attention may be thrown into a slightly different form, which ought not perhaps to be passed over without a word of notice. We may exhibit the fundamental contradication which seems to be inherent in our position as moral agents in the guise of a discrepancy between the form and the content of ethics.

Thus we may say, (1) nothing in the end is really

[1] Baudelaire, *Fleurs du Mal: le Vampire.* Cf. Blake—

"Jehovah's fingers wrote the law,
He wept, then rose in zeal and awe,
And, in the midst of Sinai's heat,
Hid it beneath His Mercy-Seat.
O Christians! Christians! tell me why
You rear it on your altars high!"

[2] Baudelaire, *Heauton timorumenos.*

worthy except the perfectly good will. The only ultimately satisfactory aim and end of action is perfection—that is, the attainment of the perfectly good, or as Kant calls it, the "holy" will. The perfectly good will, of which the content is a system of concordant ethical universals, is the only adequate form in which the ideal that is always before us in our moral aspirations after peace of mind and inward unity can be realised. Hence, so long as your own will is not identical with the ideal of the "holy" will, you cannot choose but be dissatisfied, and are still driven on in quest of an ideal which lies beyond you.

But (2) the "holy" will is, after all, an empty form and nothing more. For to say the good will is the will that wills the good, and again the good is nothing else but the good will, is to revolve in an empty circle. If a certain type of will is "good," it must be so in virtue of willing something other than its own existence. If the social will, for instance, is good, it is because it wills something more than the promotion of altruistic sentiments, to wit, the entire intellectual and physical culture, with its accompanying pleasures, which the increase of altruistic sentiment assists to bring about. And if the will to get knowledge is good, it is because in it we will not to will to get knowledge merely, but actually to get it. No will can be pronounced "good" which has itself and itself only for its object.

Hence, if the "holy" will be the one supreme ethical good, the reason must lie in the superlative worth of the content, other than itself, that is willed by the "holy" will. Yet any finite content—which is as much as to say any concrete content—must be found on an examination, such as we conducted in the antithesis of our antinomy, quite inadequate to the idea of a fully "holy" will. For there is no one object of desire, except the "holy" will itself, of which you cannot show that it is either altogether unattainable by human effort, or at any rate dependent for its attainment on accidents of fortune which cannot be regarded as affecting the ethical character of the will to which it is an object. Thus morality seems, in the popular proverbial phrase, to fall between two stools. To will anything less than or other than the "holy" will itself is to will what is necessarily inadequate to afford

final contentment to our moral aspirations; to will the "holy" will is to will a mere empty form which, being in its very nature self-contradictory and chimerical, is entirely incapable of being attained. For whichever side of the dilemma you elect you seem equally doomed to final failure and disappointment. Thus once more we see why it is that the most strenuous defenders of the claims of conduct to constitute "three-quarters" of human life cannot escape from the conviction that there is an inevitable note of sadness and weariness inseparable from all earnest moral endeavour.

So far, it will be remembered, we have purposely limited our ethical outlook by the "Aristotelian" restriction that the moral end, if it is to give the satisfaction we expect from it, must be realisable within the life of a normally healthy and normally well-circumstanced individual. We have seen in the last two sections that, under these limitations, satisfaction seems scarcely obtainable unless the individual's demands are pitched almost inconceivably low. We have now to remove those restrictions and to ask how our question about the ultimate consistency of the moral ideal with itself will be affected by the transition from an "Aristotelian" to a modern or Christian conception of the scope of moral action.

And, upon our raising this question, it at once becomes apparent that at least those difficulties which arise from the contrast between the magnitude of the ethical ideal and the shortness of human life, or its deficiency in favourable external conditions, very largely disappear. Even our present very rudimentary conceptions of a duty to posterity, inconsiderable as is that part of our life which is actually guided by them, enable us to understand that our moral struggles and acts of self-denial are not necessarily wasted because we or our immediate circle see no fruit from them. And if the progress of civilisation should some day bring about a social condition in which the whole moral and political forces of a world-wide community should be definitely combined and organised for the purpose of influencing the future course of human development,—if, in a word, mankind should ever decide that they have reached their intellectual and moral majority, and will henceforth take the direction of their destinies into their own hands instead of leaving it to chance and nature,—the possi-

bilities of a reconciliation between our ideals and our achievements would be extended to a degree which is scarcely conceivable to us at present.

It is precisely for want of such thoroughly organised co-operation on the part of all the individuals towards the realisation of an all-embracing end, extending to every section of the human race and to the remotest imaginable future, that even the most reasonable among us are tempted to doubt whether their life-labours have not been utterly thrown away, unless they themselves see the results. In a world where men are content to leave the collective future of their kind to be determined by accident and the march of events, it is impossible to regard such scepticism as altogether misplaced; in a society such as we hope mankind may some day create the consciousness of the collective control of the conditions of existence would indefinitely diminish the grounds for diffidence and distrust. We should, in such a social state, have the same sort of confidence in our power of determining the future of the human race considered as one community as we now feel in our power of influencing the future of our immediate relatives and dependents. We should have the kind of certainty that labours devoted to the amelioration of human society as a whole would not be wasted fruitlessly that we now have about the sacrifices which we make to give our children a good education and a proper start in life.

This would, of itself, go far to remove the feeling which in the present state of society cannot but obtrude itself on most of us, that in aiming at the "improvement" of our fellows we are perhaps wasting our lives in the pursuit of a chimæra, as well as to meet the more serious difficulty suggested by the antinomy we have just constructed. Though it may be true, so long as we suppose our outlook to be bounded by the duration of one or two generations, that we have to choose between an unworthy and an unrealisable ideal, it is not equally true, if our ideal is such that its realisation demands not one life or two, but the united lives of many generations of human beings in co-operation. The degree of moral or other perfection which a man can secure for himself in the course of his seventy odd years of individual existence is, no doubt, pitiable enough, but who shall set any

bounds to the perfection which he may hope to co-operate with the men of his own and of future generations in bringing about for the human race as a whole, or to speak more accurately, for that fortunate portion of the human race whose lot it will be one day to enter into the inheritance of the generations of labourers who have been before them? There is no more potent antidote against moral weariness and despondency than the reflection that, trifling as the amount of insight into truth and of command over ourselves and the forces of nature which we can hope to obtain for ourselves may be, there are no limits to the intellectual and moral attainments which we and others, by our loyal co-operation in a plan of life that leaves nothing to chance and accident, may make possible for those who are to succeed.

So far, then, Nietzsche seems perfectly right in insisting, as against the doctrine which says "treat yourself always as an end and never as a means," that the secret of moral success is to treat yourself as "something that must be overcome," or as "a bridge and a path to the Overman."[1] Indeed, I will go even further than this. One may even say, it is precisely because what little perfection I can enjoy for myself is not merely an "end in itself,"—it is precisely because I myself, with all my *Thun and Leiden*, am not only an end but at the same time an instrument and a means to the creation of a higher and happier type of being,—that life is for me, when all has been said and the loss reckoned in with the gain, ultimately worth living. So long as one adheres rigidly to the view that experiences of my own or of those immediately connected with me are the sole end of ethical endeavour and the sole reward of ethical conflict, it is at least hard not to draw the conclusion that the game of life is not worth the candle. It is precisely in so far as we have reason to think that the results of our ethical self-discipline and labour are not limited to ourselves and the few who stand next to us, but form at least a humble contribution towards the creation of a future society which shall possess the knowledge, the culture, the power over nature, the harmony within themselves to which we so

[1] Of course I am aware that the famous Kantian maxim, "Treat *humanity* in thy own person . . . always as an end," is not quite identical with the formula quoted in the text, which is, however, I believe, the interpretation universally put upon it by those who accept it.

ineffectually aspire, that we are justified in the belief that human existence is, after all, something better than "vanity and vexation of spirit." So long as we measure our gains solely by results entering into our own immediate experience, we can scarcely avoid endorsing with a difference the apostolic conclusion that "if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." The case is altered, if we look forward to a future for the world of which we can say—

> All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist,
> Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
> Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
> When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

Nor do I think, after the psychological discussion of chap. iii., that we need pay serious heed to the voice of the baser egoism of the *après moi le déluge* type when it whispers that after all *we* shall not be there to enjoy the civilisation of the future, and therefore cannot be concerned in its successes or failures. For, after all, the solid fact remains that our mental horizon, for emotion as well as for thought, is not bounded by our own lives or those of our immediate relatives; "sentimus atque experimur nos aeternos esse," says Spinoza, when he is treating of the mind's power to regard the most ancient past and the remotest future as present for the purposes of scientific investigation, and the same comment might with equal right be made upon our power of taking a direct interest in the well-being of the generations who are some day to inherit the civilisation won by our labours.

Thus we have now reached the following conclusion. In order that the antinomy which has been shown to be inherent in the concept of moral action may be reduced to a minimum, my ethical end must (*a*) be capable of at least approximate realisation by my own efforts and within the life of myself and those nearest to me, but (*b*) such realisation must itself be regarded as a means to something beyond itself—a means to the ultimate production, by the ethical co-operation of mankind in general, of a civilisation in which human beings shall, as far as possible, be the actual controllers of their own destiny.

I say "as far as possible," because, of course, even in the most intelligent society we can imagine, human control over the

forces of nature must not be supposed to be absolute. There must always remain at least the theoretical possibility that physical changes in man's environment of such a kind as either not to be foreseen or not to be averted may, to an unknown extent, interfere with his plans for his future. But when we recollect (*a*) that the physical is already of much less importance than the social environment in determining the career of civilised individuals and communities, and (*b*) that with increasing scientific knowledge of the course of external nature the merely physical environment must steadily become of even less relative importance than at present, we shall see that it is by no means chimerical to anticipate extraordinary developments in the general direction of setting human destiny free from the domination of unforeseen or unavoidable physical accidents, and we shall be very slow indeed to set any bounds to the extent to which the man of the future may be the "master of his fate."

So far, then, it clearly appears that the sense of fruitlessness and futility which is so characteristic of our moral life, is due less to the radical self-contradictoriness of the moral experience than to the want of a thorough-going organisation of the forces of society for moral purposes. The disappointment and dissatisfaction to which this apparent futility of the moral struggles gives rise might thus be indefinitely diminished by the substitution of what Mr. Lester Ward has called "collective telesis" for the undisciplined and isolated action of individuals and small private corporations. In Mr. Ward's ideal society, as in Plato's republic, the very form and constitution of society would be an effective guarantee that moral endeavour would, on the whole, not be wasted, and that ultimately some one, if not the agent himself, would be the better for each individual's strenuous devotion to his highest ideals of good.

For the properly organised state would, on the one hand, provide the necessary machinery for the realisation of true practical ideals, and would, on the other, by the educational influence of its institutions and general spirit, prevent the extensive spread of any ideals which were merely chimerical and impractical. The very fact that the "pattern of our city" had been brought down from "heaven" to earth

would make it impossible for the citizens in any large number to waste their energies by consecrating them to a non-human "kingdom of heaven," where there should be "neither marrying nor giving in marriage," nor any other of the characteristic features of a definitely human society.

Even in the present absence of such collective co-operation towards the creation of an ideal human society we may at least say that much of the apparent aimlessness and fruitlessness of the moral life will vanish if we regard the creation of the spirit of collective ethical co-operation as the proximate "final cause" of our moral endeavour. So far at least we may say that the ethical end ceases to appear unrealisable as soon as we learn the lesson that, though "Humanity" may be always end and never means, the individual man is never a mere end, but always also a means to something beyond and better than himself. To have insisted unflinchingly upon this truth is, amid much confusion, mistake, and downright madness, the great and imperishable service of Nietzsche to ethical philosophy. However far we may be from recognising in Nietzsche's rather unamiable heroes our own ideal human being, we may at least say that ethics seems to have said its last word in the command to live for the creation of the "Overman."

It is all the more important that we should go on to ask whether even in this its last commandment morality can be said to be fully consistent with itself. For if the most satisfactory account of the practical ideal which we can present to ourselves be found to be finally self-contradictory, and to involve on a closer inspection the same old antinomies which we have detected in the more current ethical ideals, we shall finally have to answer the question, Does moral science exhibit the internal coherency characteristic of a direct derivative from ultimate philosophical principles? in the negative. I must therefore invite special attention to the following reflections, which, as it seems to me, clearly show that even our most ultimate and practically most satisfactory formulation of the aim of moral endeavour is not really free from internal discrepancy and incoherence.

This may be exhibited from two main points of view. We may consider (1) the ideal of a perfect human society

regarded as an incentive towards efforts directed towards its own future realisation, (2) the actual existence of the realised ideal regarded as a full and complete satisfaction for the desires and endeavours of its constituent members. If the ideal, as stated in the last few pages, is either not to be realised, or, if realised, would still leave anything beyond itself to stir human aspiration, we must pronounce it only a partial reconciliation of the contradictions inherent in ordinary ethical experience. We begin then with (1) the question, How far is the conception of a perfect human society an ultimately adequate moral ideal for members of an imperfectly organised society?

It is of course clear that the value of such an ideal depends in the first place upon its being no chimæra, but something realisable in the known conditions of human life upon earth by human agency. If the creation of a society endowed with full control over its own destinies, and subject to no external conditions except such as it recognises to be compatible with its own aspirations,[1] is not really possible, then it is only in appearance that our recognition of it as the ethical ideal has delivered us from the old difficulties about the ultimate inaccessibility of our moral ends. In so far, then, as any doubt exists as to our power to create such a type of existence, we are once more thrown back upon the contradiction between the satisfactoriness and the reality of the moral ideal. If the perfect society cannot be called into actual existence, then, however practically useful the belief in its possibility may be as a means of making human life more endurable and human experience less disappointing, it is none the less from the philosopher's point of view, like the more narrowly restricted ideals we have previously discussed, an illusion.

Again, if we are to acquiesce in the conception of such a society as the ultimate end of moral action, we must have warrant for believing that it is capable not only of existence but of permanent—indeed of indefinitely prolonged existence. In fact this latter characteristic is really implicitly included in the very conception of that self-determination and freedom

[1] I insert this qualification to meet the objection that the mere fact of individual mortality makes the realisation of the ideal of a self-determined society impossible. Mortality ceases to be any check to man's power to determine his destiny the moment it is accepted as a foreseen and inevitable element in the situation.

from interference from without which we have regarded as the characteristic of a perfect human society. Unless the perfect human society, when once it had come into existence, could secure itself against premature extinction—that is, against any extinction which was not both foreseen and completely acquiesced in on the part of society itself, it would not answer at all to our notion of a type of existence freed from dependance upon the accidents of external nature, and in complete mastery of its own destinies. And it is only such a self-determined and free society which can reasonably be represented as a finally satisfactory ideal, devoid of all elements of illusion and disappointment.

Now, on the one hand, we can hardly be said to have sufficient warrant for asserting with confidence that the creation of such a society is really possible. Looking at the degree to which the progress of civilisation has already made human happiness and destiny more and more independent of unforeseen and unavoidable events in the order of extra-human nature, and more and more dependent upon events which can be foreseen and controlled for human ends by human agency, we may no doubt say that there is no proved impossibility in the notion of the indefinite extension of human mastery over human life. At the same time, it might be that if we knew more of the course of extra-human nature, especially of that part of it which forms our own immediate material environment, we might discover that there are circumstances in that environment which would effectually prevent our passing far beyond the very imperfect degree of collective self-mastery which we have already obtained.

It is, to put a concrete case by way of example, I conceive, impossible to feel certain that the circumstances of our situation may not entail the regular alternation of periods of imperfect civilisation with periods of barbarism, such as that which engulfed the ancient Hellenic culture, and from which we are now only slowly emerging. Steady and unimpeded progress towards the ideal of a free civilisation cannot be shown to be impossible, but, on the other hand, it certainly cannot be shown to be really possible.[1] We are justified in

[1] I may be allowed once more to call attention to the difference—often disregarded by "idealist" metaphysics—between conceivability and real possibility. That is

saying, "It is at least conceivable that, if mankind act long enough on the assumption that the free self-controlled society is possible, they may one day bring it into being;" we are equally justified in adding, "and even if they do not they will have lived with the complete satisfaction and the deeper peace of mind for their generous illusion." We are not justified in silencing the question which persons of a speculative and reflective cast cannot refrain from raising, "But is it not, after all, an illusion?" even though we may believe that it would be practically better for them not to have raised it. At best we can go no further than to say, "This ideal, if it is really practicable, most nearly fulfils the conditions of being at once comprehensive and in harmony with the psychological facts of human nature, and is again only practicable, if at all, on the condition that men believe it to be so," which is as much as to say, "All things are possible to him that believeth"—a comforting assurance to the convinced believer, but a very unconvincing argument to the sceptic, who is still doubtful as to the cogency of the reasons for believing.

So again, if we once allow ourselves to face the question of the permanency of the ideal state of society. That we require sufficient permanency to secure the members of such a society against premature and unwelcome dissolution of it, if we are to accept it as a finally satisfactory ethical ideal, seems quite certain. In fact, in passing from the "Aristotelian" to the modern conception of the scope of moral action, we have only exchanged the conception of individual for that of a social "βίος τέλειος." As I have already maintained, we are not warranted in demanding an individual future existence for ourselves on merely ethical grounds.[1] But that is precisely

conceivable which cannot be shown to conflict with the facts of our situation as they are known to us. That is possible, in the proper sense of the words, which depends, as far as can be known, only upon conditions which there is good reason for taking as real, *i.e.* upon conditions which can be shown to have been at one time or another, or to be now, facts of experience. As Avenarius puts it (*Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, i. p. 27), "Suppose that, after an alteration of a system in the moment T_2 has been posited, I think of the system as replaced in the state before the alteration, *i.e.* in the moment T_1, but still in logical relation to the alteration, I then describe the system as *capable* of the *alteration* posited in T_2, and then as itself changeable in relation to the supposed alteration. And I describe the supposed alteration . . . as possible in relation to the system."

[1] This is not the place for a set discussion of the worth of what is commonly called the "moral" argument for individual immortality. I do not wish it to be supposed that I am unconscious of the existence of that argument, or that I do not

because we are not warranted in considering our individual selves as all-sufficient ethical ends. Because, from the modern or more comprehensive point of view, my own individual life is at once an end and a means towards the realisation of a social ideal that extends far beyond its own limits, the fact of my own mortality does not necessarily mean that my life is a failure and my hard-won moral gains lost. They are in fact not lost, for the simple reason that I can hand them on as my contribution towards the creation or the perpetuation of a type of society which permanently embodies my highest hopes and most cherished ideals. But it would be quite another thing were the ideal society itself to come into being only to be snuffed out again by the course of events. Hence we must say that, if the moral ideal is not to be pronounced ultimately self-contradictory and illusory, we must be able to establish the possibility of the practically indefinite perpetuation of the perfect society if once it has been created.

recognise its legitimacy within certain restrictions. But I would urge that (*a*) the argument as presented by its defenders is not based so much upon the known empirical facts of the ethical experience as upon a metaphysical and ultra-ethical theory of the part played by that experience in the larger whole of human life and experience, and (*b*) that, unless we are exceptionally candid and impartial in our analysis of our own emotions, we are always in danger of dignifying with the name of "ethical postulate" what may really be no more than a statement as to what we should like. Thus, before making the demand that the universe shall, on pain of being pronounced morally bankrupt, gratify our desire for immortality, we ought to satisfy ourselves, not only that we have the desire, but that the fullest *βίος τέλειος* with which earth can present us, the experience say of a Sophocles or a Goethe, would still leave us with the same desire, and further that it may not be good for the universe as a whole that certain of its inhabitants should feel a desire for indefinite continuance which cannot be satisfied. In that case our desire for immortality, though fruitless as far as we are concerned, would contribute to the perfection of a wider whole. On this point consult the pregnant remarks of Mr. Bradley (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 508, ed. 1). In the present chapter I would be understood as expressing no opinion as to the truth or falsehood of the belief in individual immortality. I would, however, urge as relevant to our argument two considerations :—

(1) If such expressions as, *e.g.*—

> "I warmed both hands before the fire of life ;
> It sinks and I am ready to depart"—

and again, *μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον· τὸ δ' ἐπεὶ φανῇ βῆναι κεῖσ' ὁπόθενπερ ἥκει πολὺ δεύτερον ὡς τάχιστα*, faithfully represent the final judgment passed upon life at its close by richly-endowed natures after an experience of all that is brightest and best in existence, that is a fact of which the popular "moral" argument for the future life ought to take more serious account than it has hitherto done.

(2) It is at any rate positively false to say that individual immortality is an "ethical postulate" in the sense that without it goodness and self-sacrifice cannot be justified to the reason. The whole point of this and the following chapter is to vindicate the reasonableness of "virtue" without such an appeal to the unknown possibilities of an inscrutable future.

Now, as far as we can at present see, there is not sufficient warrant for a confident belief in the indefinite continuance of human conscious existence. For however much the future progress of scientific and political civilisation may enable men to control their own destiny and to protect themselves against the accidents of their physical environment, it seems at least clear that there are certain indispensable prerequisites of human existence which must always be independent of even the most perfect human foresight and practical ingenuity. Should the temperature of our planet, for instance, cool down below the degree of warmth necessary for the maintenance of animal life, or again, should the oxygen of the atmosphere or the supply of proteid matter for nutritive purposes become exhausted, then no degree of scientific and mechanical ability would be sufficient to guarantee humanity against degeneration, and finally extinction.

And though it is apparently, to some extent at least, possible for human foresight to anticipate and provide against the last-named danger,[1] it seems scarcely conceivable, at any rate to a layman like myself, that mankind should ever acquire the power to counteract the effects of an exhaustion of the world's oxygen or a steady decrease of its temperature, while the remaining theoretical alternative of a collective migration to some unknown region of the universe more fitted to be the scene of an active civilisation than an oxygenless or warmthless earth, seems even more remote from the sphere of the practicable. Hence we have no choice except either to reject the well-known evidence[2] of the gradual dissipation of energy from our solar system on the ground of incompatibility with our "ethical postulates," or to admit that the indefinite perpetuation of a perfect or free social system is impossible, and that the extinction of the human race is a mere matter of time.

This being so, we have next to ask whether increased scientific insight into the laws of the physical universe, and

[1] This is admitted even by so pessimistic a speculator as Sir W. Crookes (see his Address to the British Association of 1898).

[2] For which see, *e.g.*, Balfour Stewart, *Conservation of Energy*, p. 152 ff.; the evidence is, however, so far from conclusive that it at best seems to yield no more than a certain balance of probability against indefinite continuance. For an acute examination of the question, see Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i. pp. 199-202.

the intimate connection of life and consciousness with the various forms of physical energy, might not so reconcile the members of the ideal society of the future to the necessity of their own ultimate disappearance as to prevent extinction, when it arrives, from being resented. In that case, though the life of the perfect society would not be endless, inasmuch as there would be a time when it had ceased to be, it would nevertheless be a true βίος τέλειος, inasmuch as there would be no premature or unwelcome cessation of human existence. Mankind would then be justified in looking forward to a history prolonged, not indeed for ever, but long enough to guarantee the fulfilment, so far as such fulfilment is consistent with the nature of the universe as a whole, of every human aspiration, and such continuance, it might reasonably be urged, is for all practical purposes what we mean by immortality.

Now at first sight there is something very plausible about this way of looking at the question, especially as it seems to rest upon an analogy between the position of the human race as a whole and that which experience reveals in the individual. Just as the individual's life is not necessarily a moral failure for want of being immortal, so, it might be said, neither is that of the race. Just as an individual who has spent a lifetime of seventy or eighty years in the uninterruptedly successful pursuit of certain moral ideals is considered a successful and happy man, so the human race might be regarded as happy and successful if it could achieve a truly free self-controlling social organisation, even though the life of that organisation, like the life of the individual by whose agency it is to be created, must sooner or later have an end. And some such line of reasoning must, I suppose, be actually adopted by that not inconsiderable number of ethical thinkers who regard it as almost self-evident that the "future of the race" is an ultimately satisfactory moral ideal.

Yet the reasoning just expounded seems to me to be fundamentally vicious, and the analogy between the case of the individual and that of the race upon which it rests thoroughly fallacious. For it is precisely because the individual knows that his kind will not perish with him that he can contemplate his own individual surcease with some

measure of equanimity. As I have said before, just in proportion as a man's life has been spent in working in one way or another for the creation of the free self-controlling community, he is confident that his "hard-won gains," intellectual, æsthetic, and moral, will not die with him. If it is not given to him to "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," he has at least the blessing pronounced on those who "rest from their labours and their works do follow them." And, as we have already seen, just in proportion as the grounds for this confidence in the future realisation of the social ideal are in any case absent, the individual justifiably and reasonably feels that his individual failure to secure full and permanent satisfaction does render his moral life aimless and fruitless.[1] We die content, if content, because we are confident that the race does not die with us. In the conception of the "Overman"—or as I would rather say, in order to mark my dissent from part of the peculiar content of the Nietzschean ethics—of the free or perfect or self-controlling community, we have a moral end to which our personal existence may reasonably be regarded as a transitory means.

But with the race or the perfect society, considered as a corporate individual, the case is different. I may be willing to spend and be spent in working for the coming of the "Overman," but there is no such further ideal before the race or the perfect society itself. If the race as a whole perishes, then, unless we assume as an "ethical postulate" the possibility of social relations between humanity and some superior race of beings living under entirely different physical conditions, it perishes childless and heirless. There is no recognisable "beyond" to which the human race or the perfect society as a body can look as to a successor, and into whose more abiding consciousness its moral and intellectual achievements can be taken up. There is no more ultimate reality towards which the life of the race can be shown to stand as a means in the

[1] But for some such faith in the future one could hardly withhold one's assent from the famous "last words" attributed to Laplace. It is only because we all more or less confidently cherish the belief of the poet that—

> "Though our life were blind, our death were fruitless,
> Not therefore were the whole world's high hope rootless"—

that we in our sanest moments judge the doctrine *rien n'est vrai que l'amour* so ignoble.

same way and for the same reason as the life of the individual stands to that of the race. Hence the analogy between the position of the individual and that of the race will not really hold water; the grounds upon which it is reasonable for the individual to be content with a limited existence do not exist in the case of the race.[1]

And for this reason the suggestion that the final extinction of the human race, when it comes, might be accepted by a perfect society without demur or reluctation must, I think, be decidedly negatived. It is indeed quite conceivable, as I have admitted in the last chapter, that humanity might as a fact welcome or even actively promote its own dissolution, but only on the supposition that humanity should first find itself in permanent and deep-seated conflict with an environment which is inconsistent with its ideals, and which it is unable to modify. In the perfect society such a state of general pessimism would be quite inconceivable. In proportion as, whether by adjustment of ideals and aspirations to the environment, or by the more characteristically human method of transformation of environment into harmony with ideals and aspirations, social life approximates more closely to the ideal of perfect satisfaction for every member of the community, life must necessarily be accompanied with pleasure and with the desire for continuance, and degeneration from the ideal, not to say extinction, must be increasingly unwelcome. Success and happiness may be reconciled to decrease by the reflection that their own achievements will contribute to further success on the part of future generations; it is only unhappiness and failure that can find mere surcease as such desirable. In the words already quoted from Nietzsche, "Weh spricht Vergeh! Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit."

And I believe experience would show that if we could clearly and permanently realise that the highest and completest perfection we can anticipate for humanity must, after all, end in extinction and collapse, confidence in the future destiny of our race would cease to afford us any lasting consolation for our own imperfection and evanescence. In our moods of

[1] In fact, if humanity is an organism, as some tell us it is, it appears to be an organism without the means of reproduction. Even Mr. Spencer's ingenuity has not identified the genitalia of the body politic.

pessimism and dissatisfaction with the universe we may indeed derive some perverse comfort from the reflection that it is all but for a time, and that the curtain will sooner or later fall upon the tragical farce of human existence; but such moods are after all transitory, and are recognised by ourselves as morally unworthy. In practice, when we are at our ethical best, we do look forward to the future of human society as our highest and worthiest ideal, precisely because the probable duration of that future is so vast, when compared with the brevity of our individual existence, as to seem unending. And thus the satisfactoriness of the most satisfactory ideal which we can formulate within strictly ethical limits, is seen to be bound up with a conviction which, from the point of view of science and theory, we are driven to regard as falling under the suspicion of being no better than illusion.

After this, it might seem almost superfluous to raise the further question, supposing the ideal of a perfect society once realised, Would it really provide full and complete satisfaction for the desires and endeavours of its constituent members? For the sake of theoretical completeness, however, we will subjoin a short discussion of the ultimate ethical ideal regarded from this second point of view.

(2) It is clear from what has been said already, that if the ideal of the perfect society is to have for *us* the value of an ultimately self-consistent moral end, we must believe it capable of adequate realisation. We must believe, then, in the possibility of a social order so perfect that nothing is left for its constituent members to desire beyond its maintenance, without any but the most trivial and incidental modifications. And we find as a matter of fact that the possibility of such a social order is vehemently maintained by one, at least, of the ablest champions of perfectionist ethics.[1]

But, supposing such a perfect human society to have come into being, we have still to ask, What would be the characteristic tone of the ethical experiences of the individuals comprised in it? To us, who live in an age in which men are only just beginning to realise the possibility of creating

[1] Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 328. "There is no contradiction in the supposition of a human life purged of vices and with no wrongs left to set right. It is, indeed, merely the supposition of human life with all its capacities realised."

such a society, the perfect society may appear, so long as we do not consider too closely or curiously, a final and satisfactory end of all aspirations and endeavours; but how would it "strike a contemporary?" Would the perfection of the social organism, understanding by that perfection its emancipation in the highest possible degree from dependence upon any but the social environment, inevitably bring in its train the perfection of the individual—that is, the complete and final adjustment of his achievements to his ideals or not? Clearly, it seems to me, the answer must be it would not. For individual perfection, as we have already had occasion to see, is really not attainable by any finite being. Whether you suppose the individual inhabitant of the community of the future to have already exhausted all the possibilities of attainment, and, like Alexander, to be in want of fresh worlds to conquer, or to have perpetually before him the unfulfilled ideal of a future which is not as yet secured, you must in either case admit that for the most highly developed member of the most perfect of communities the old antithesis between the desirable and the attainable would be no less real than for ourselves.

For, once concede that the denizen of the perfect state has still any as yet unreached ideals before him, be it even the ideal of securing the unchanged transmission of the *status quo* to his successors, and you have admitted that his ethical ideal, like our own, is something which is never ultimately reached, but recedes as he advances towards it. On the other hand, if you maintain that the individual in the perfect society would have no unsatisfied longings or unfulfilled wishes, you must pronounce him either not a man at all or an unhappy man. For, to repeat once more an old conclusion, while no man can be ultimately and finally happy without the complete realisation of all his aspirations, no man can attain that realisation without either ceasing to be a man, or becoming miserably and hopelessly *blasé*. In this respect the denizen of the imaginary perfect commonwealth would be no better, or rather, would be even worse off than us his predecessors. For we have at least the as yet only dimly imagined ideal of a perfect commonwealth before us to stimulate us to moral exertion, whereas he, with nothing but the mere perpetuation

of the present to care for, is condemned by his very perfections to a life of unideal and unsatisfying routine. If the inhabitant then of that which appears to us as the perfect commonwealth of the future is to possess an ethical experience even as satisfactory as our own, it can only be on the condition that he too should have before him, as the ultimate object of his actions, the concept of a still more perfect state of existence, as remote from the world of his experience as that is itself from the world in which we live at the present day.

In other words, the "perfect commonwealth" must be pronounced a useful but ultimately illusory ideal, incapable of ever being brought into actual existence, but valuable as a regulative model for the guidance of the confessedly imperfect, and moral progress must in point of fact be declared to be in its own nature indefinite and incapable of any fixed goal. And to assert that moral progress is necessarily an infinite process is equivalent, as we have already shown, to declaring that the ethical end is one that can never be reached, and that all moral endeavour is in the last resort foredoomed by its own inherent contradictoriness of purpose to failure. "Infinite and unending progress," no doubt, is a fine-sounding, and "predestined failure" a dismal-sounding, phrase, but as far as the meaning goes there is nothing to choose between them. And it is precisely because morality is perpetually trying to disguise its own constitutional infirmity of purpose and self-contradiction under this and other such high-sounding and complimentary phrases, that the serious philosophic thinker finds himself constrained to admit sadly that a certain amount of cant seems to be deeply ingrained in the very nature of morality.

To cut a long story short, the candid examination of the concept of a perfect community, or perfected human nature, has shown us that the most satisfactory theoretical account of the moral end that can be given within the limits of ethical science affords no way of escape from the difficulties enumerated at the beginning of the present chapter, and contains, only in a more subtly disguised form, all the elements of contradiction which beset the more restricted or Aristotelian ideal. In practice no doubt the very fact that the "modern" ideal contains the old antithesis in a more subtly disguised form

renders it more satisfactory as a guide to moral conduct than the "Aristotelian" ideal. With a little ingenious make-believe, and a little good-natured shutting of the eyes to certain considerations, the "modern" ideal can be made of incalculable service in active life: but the fact remains that it is, for philosophical analysis, after all an illusory ideal, and will only be of use to us in practice so far as we willingly or unwillingly submit to be hoodwinked for our own good. As philosophers, we can find no way from the conclusion already enunciated—that unsuccessful struggle is of the very essence of morality, even as morality is of the very essence of the specifically human life. To escape from the atmosphere of the eternally unsuccessful struggle, whether by rising above it or by sinking below it, would in fact be to escape from ourselves. So long as we remain neither beasts nor gods, but men, so long do we seem doomed to drag about with us a "body of death" from which it is impossible we should ever be freed—unless, at least, there is, as Aristotle and St. Paul hold, a form of experience in which we transcend the categories of ethics, and in which therefore we are, to some incipient extent, something more than man.

Nor is it difficult to put our finger on the central flaw of the ethical experience, the ultimate root of so much bitterness of heart. The nature of this flaw may be expressed, as by Mr. Bradley, by the statement that the secret aspiration of the moral man is to obtain individual perfection—that is, to obtain a contradiction in terms. For perfection and *finite* individuality are mutually incompatible. Nothing is ultimately perfect except the whole universe of being as a whole, and you cannot therefore be perfect except in some sense in which you are more than a finite individual.[1] But morality is resolutely determined not only to have perfection, but to have it in the form of individual and finite existence—a form which is really quite inadequate to the proposed content.

Or the same thought may be expressed in the language of concrete psychological detail by saying that the attainment

[1] It would be of no avail to say that one part of a wider whole or system may be perfect, as a part, without being itself the whole. For the paradoxical point about our situation as human beings is, that while we are certainly not the whole Universe, we are equally certainly something much more than *pars Naturae*. We are no doubt *partes Naturae*, but we are at the same time something more as well.

of perfection is ultimately incompatible with the retention, as a characteristic form of experience, of the distinctions of past, present, and future time. Morality, as we have already seen, moves entirely within the limits of the time-consciousness. For morality only exists when approbation and disapprobation exist—that is, where there is a felt distinction between ideas and the perceptual realities for which they stand, and ideas as distinct from percepts have no meaning except for a consciousness to which the distinctions of "now," "no longer," and "not yet" are fundamental. Hence morality is essentially an endeavour to obtain some form of experience which does not yet exist. If the "not yet" could be finally done away with—or in other words, if morality could ever actually get that at which it aims it would, in the very moment of its success, cease to be morality and pass into a different and a higher form of experience.

Or I may put the same thing in yet a third form. I have an infinity of desires which I can only gratify one at a time. Every experience of satisfaction would be eternal if it could, and, from our very constitution, none can last but for a moment. If I could get everything that I want and all at once, there would be for me no such thing as morality. Morality arises from the necessity of choosing which satisfactions I will have now and unconditionally, and which I will postpone, and enjoy only on condition that they can be had consistently with the retention of the others.

We can now see, as we could not have done at any earlier stage of our discussion, in what direction the moral experience needs to be transformed if it is to be raised above the level of the antitheses and contradictions which beset it as mere morality. The source of these contradictions has been discovered to be the temporal character of the moral experience, in virtue of which ideal and achievement inevitably fall apart. If we are to find an experience in which human craving and aspiration may find a satisfaction which is neither transitory nor illusory, it must be experience of a type which transcends this severance of "now" from "no longer" and "not yet." It must, in fact, be an experience of perfection not as something possibly to be achieved in the remote future, provided our endeavours are not defeated by adverse external fortune,

but of perfection as a quality in some way pertaining to human existence here and now, and characterising our failures no less than what we call our successes. Or, what is the same thing, it must be an experience of ourselves as being something more than finite individuals or subordinate "parts" of a world-system.

The finally satisfactory experience, if it exists at all, must be one in which we are conscious of ourselves as being in some sense identical with the whole in which our lives as human and ethical beings are a part—as being, in fact, something much more than "mere" men. The only complete satisfaction which is not ultimately an illusion must be a satisfaction arising from the conviction that our lives, with all their mistakes and failures, are "as functions of the perfect universe already perfect,"[1] and that we are ourselves in some implicit way the "perfect Universe" of which our lives are "functions." If there is such a form of experience, then after all we are not touched by the demonstration, irrefragable as it may be in itself, that none of our ideals for the future is capable of ultimate realisation, for, so far as we and our lives are "functions of the perfect Universe" we are conscious of our own fundamental identity with an order which fulfils itself no less in our blunders, mistakes, sins, and ultimately perhaps in our extinction as finite individuals, than in our highest successes. As functions of that Universe we are already perfect, and know ourselves to be so.

Now an experience of this kind is no mere imaginary creation of theory. The conviction that man is something more than "mere" man, and that his perfection in any sense in which it is capable of existing at all, exists now if he only knew it, has been the last word of more than one system of practical philosophy and more than one great ethical religion. We meet it in Aristotle in the form[2] of the recognition of

[1] I borrow the useful phrase from *Appearance and Reality*, p. 508.

[2] Cf. particularly, *Ethics*, x. 1177, b, 26 *ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη βίος κρείττων ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον· οὐ γὰρ ᾗ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν οὕτω βιώσεται, ἀλλ' ᾗ θεῖόν τι ἐν αὑτῷ ὑπάρχει*, taken together with the apparently contradictory but really complementary statement, 1178 a, *τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δὴ ὁ κατὰ τὸν νοῦν βίος* (sc. *ἡδιστόν ἐστιν*) *εἴπερ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἄνθρωπος*. This is singularly like Spinoza's famous description of the human mind as an *aeternus modus cogitandi* which, in company with other such modes, makes up the eternal and infinite intellect of God. For St. Paul's views see *Galatians* ii. 20, 21, 1 *Corinthians* iii. 13, and *Romans* v. 10 ff.

the "life of speculation" as the highest and happiest existence possible to man; in Spinoza in the not very different form of the doctrine of the freedom to be achieved by true knowledge; in St. Paul in the form of the conception of a life which is at once mine and yet not mine, but that of "Christ" living in me. Speculative questions might, no doubt, be raised as to the validity and objective reference of this general type of experience, and to some extent we shall find ourselves obliged to take such questions into account in the sequel. But, though we cannot avoid to some extent discussing the ultimate intelligibility of the various expressions which have been given to this experience, we are fully justified in assuming its real existence as a psychological fact, exactly as we have assumed the real existence of the ethical experiences which seem to find themselves at once summed up and transcended in the consciousness of which we are now speaking, and which, from its intimate connection with the great ethical religions, we may henceforth call, for brevity's sake, the religious experience. The task of our next chapter, therefore, will be primarily, not to establish the existence or even to discuss exhaustively the validity of the religious experience as an apprehension of reality, so much as to throw some light upon its characteristic quality and the modifications which it imposes upon the ethical concepts with which we have hitherto been working in our survey of the practical life.

CHAPTER VIII

"BEYOND GOOD AND BAD"

ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον · λέγεσθαι
οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς οὔνομα.

HERACLEITUS.

WE have just seen that analysis of the ethical experience leads us directly to the form of consciousness which has been described in the last section as the "religious," as that in which the defects of the narrowly and strictly ethical experience are, to some extent at any rate, made good. In the present chapter, then, we must deal with the religious experience itself as the highest and final form in which our practical aspirations express themselves. If the results of our examination prove unfavourable to the claim of the religious experience itself to present us with a finally self-consistent and all-comprehending picture of life and existence, we shall be driven to revert at the end of our Essay to the position attained upon general and *a priori* grounds in our opening chapter—that ethics, as the science which describes the practical side of our experience as human beings, cannot be in any case based upon pre-conceived metaphysical certainties. For the religious experience being, as we have seen, the shape into which the ethical experience is transformed in the attempt to force it into consistency with itself, must present the nearest approximation possible within the limits of the practical side of life to the rigid self-consistency and complete comprehensiveness of a "pure" experience, and the scientific analysis of its contents must therefore approach most nearly of all the practical sciences to the ideal of a branch of knowledge founded upon metaphysics—that is, upon knowledge of a system which

is, in all its parts, experience. If the religious experience, then, is not "pure" it is certain that no form of practical, or, using the word in a wide and general sense, ethical experience has the characteristics which we have found to be essential to a "pure" experience.

The main purpose of the following pages will therefore be to establish two leading results. (*a*) That the religious experience itself, when tested at the bar of metaphysics, is found to be full of unresolved and unresolvable contradictions and inconsistencies, and therefore to require modification to an unknown extent and in unknown directions before it could be accepted as a finally satisfactory account of the world of experienced reality; and (*b*) that in the religious experience, defective as it is when taken as a final explanation of things, the narrowly and purely ethical or moral concepts with which we have hitherto been working—"obligation," "merit," "worth," and the rest—are already so transformed as to be emptied of all significance; in a word, that you cannot become truly "religious" without at the same time becoming something more—or less—than moral. The chapter will thus fall into three principal sections. We shall first have to attempt an analysis of the experience to which we have given the name of "religious," and to exhibit its most characteristic features in some detail; next we must deal, also in some detail, with the various points of agreement between the religious and the narrowly moral view of life, so as to give some insight into the nature of the modification which our practical categories undergo when morality passes into religion; last of all we must, more briefly, indicate the principal sources of weakness and inconsistency within the religious experience itself, and so prepare the way for that final verdict upon the claims of religion to give a theoretically satisfactory account of the facts of life, with which our Essay will conclude. We proceed then in what follows to take up the subjects just enumerated in the order in which they have been mentioned.

Analysis of the "Religious" experience from the philosophical point of view.

An analysis, at once sympathetic and critical, of the religious experience as it actually exists among civilised people has long been, and seems long likely to remain, a *desideratum*

in philosophy. A great deal of work, much of it unfortunately mere guess-work, has been done upon the problem of the so-called "origin of religion"[1] and of the order of the stages in its development; much also has been done in the way of "religionsphilosophie," *i.e.* in the attempt to read into the theological dogmas of various churches the doctrines of various philosophical systems, or, *vice versa*, to read the dogmas of the churches into the doctrines of the philosophers. But amid all this energetic application to religious problems, the true problem which is the *prius* of all religious philosophising, the problem of giving an impartial description of the religious experience itself as it is immediately experienced by civilised Western men, has been almost entirely neglected. To remedy this neglect, except in the most imperfect way is, we are of course aware, entirely beyond our power; but whatever may be thought of our own small preliminary contribution to the construction of such an analysis, we may perhaps at least take some trifling degree of credit to ourselves for having raised the right question, however incompetent we may be to answer it.

First, then, by way of defining the object which calls for analysis, let us make it quite clear that what we wish to describe is no form of dogmatic or of speculative theology. We are unconcerned or only indirectly concerned with the formal expression of the "doctrines" of any religion. For theology and its doctrines are never as such matters of direct experience. Every theological doctrine, from that of the existence of God to that of the existence of a Trinity of three Persons in One God, is an hypothesis advanced in explanation of the simpler and more concrete experienced facts of the religious life. Now it is these facts, as they are immediately experienced before the process of theological reflection and speculation has begun its work upon them, which we wish to reach. It is of course impossible to find the religious experience flourishing in absolute independence of the speculative beliefs which have moulded our language about such matters and given its direction to our earliest education; but by abstracting as far as possible from the utterances of professed theologians with a passion for

[1] As if the religious experience could not have had very different beginnings with different races and in different circumstances.

systematisation, by attending primarily not to avowed expositions of "religious truths" but to the immediate expressions of devotional feeling, and by carefully comparing the expression given to such feelings by saints and prophets with that of eminent heretics and unorthodox mystics, we may at least make some approximation to an account of the religious experience in which all essential features and no others shall be represented. In what follows our aim has been, in a very general and imperfect way, to indicate some of the results to which such an analysis would lead.

We have spoken, at the end of the last chapter, of the religious experiences as that in which we are aware of ourselves as already members of a system or order which is already perfect, and thus of ourselves as in some way already perfect. Much the same view is expressed by Mr. Bosanquet in an essay in which he says that the difference between morality and religion is that morality bids you realise the "good will," whereas religion tells you that the "good will" is already real, and that nothing else is real.[1] This consciousness of the present perfection of the real system and of ourselves, as in some way identical with its essential principle,[2] is not of course to be found in an equally definite and precise form in all religions and at all periods of time. It appears, in the very definite form in which we have given utterance to it, perhaps only in Christianity and in the religious mysticism which has arisen within the bosom of the closely allied religion of Mohammed.

But some such sense of being "more than man" seems to be involved in even the earliest and crudest form of any experience which can be recognised as qualitatively identical with what we, as civilised European Protestants, know by the name of "religion." It is, for instance, only in so far as savage conceptions of the relation of the clan or tribe to its divine kinsman includes some sense of a

[1] Bosanquet, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 124 ff.

[2] I do not mean by this language to retract what I have already said in chap. ii. against the Neo-Hegelian fetish of the "eternal self." My whole point is that the "natural" man as such is no more eternal than, or, as we ought perhaps rather to say, just as eternal as anything else, and that—as Spinoza long ago taught—it is only in proportion as you *know* yourself identical with the Deity that you *become* identical with him. This is the palpable but unavoidable paradox which comes to light in Evangelical Protestantism in the doctrine of justification by faith.

more than human protection and a more than human champion, that we can intelligibly assert the existence of a "religious" element in savage beliefs and practices. Apart from this sense of *practical* union with the "more than man," and consequent perfection, even if perfection be crudely conceived of as including nothing more than invincibility in the field, there is nothing characteristically religious in entertaining superstitions about omens and portents, or relating myths about the creation. It is from this *practical* element that religion derives its significance for life and thought, and without it, it would be, as Artistotle says of the severed human hand, identical with the reality only in name.

And further, if there is no religion, in the full sense of the word, except where there is at least some incipient consciousness of identity with a perfect reality which is something more than ourselves, it is equally necessary to insist that wherever there is this consciousness there you have a form of experience which is qualitatively identical with the religious experience, no matter what may be the object or system which serves as the centre for the experience. This has been so admirably brought out by Mr. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality* that I need hardly do more than call attention to the fact. As Mr. Bradley well says, the essential characteristic of religion is the consciousness of our own perfection as members in a perfect system or whole, and the nature of that whole itself is a matter of only secondary importance,[1] though of course some objects are better fitted than others to bear the strain of being turned into the centre of a religion, and there can be ultimately only *one* adequate centre for religion in its highest and most perfect form, the perfect Universe itself. Within these limits the centre of religious emotion may apparently be almost anything in which we feel a strong and absorbing interest, and which we recognise as higher and greater than ourselves—a friend, a woman, a country, etc. etc.[2] The

[1] So Spinoza says truly enough in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, that the point of primary religious importance is that men should recognise God as an object of worship, and should be convinced that salvation is only to be found in obedience to the laws of God, which are the laws of nature. It is, as he goes on to say, largely indifferent what further notions each man may form of God, *e.g.* whether God is thought of as fire or as spirit.

[2] And one may "worship" or "make a religion of" two or more such objects at once; only then there is always the possibility of a crisis in which we may have to

notion that it is of the essence of religion to seek its centre in the "other world" of spirits and goblins I am compelled, with Mr. Bradley, to regard as a mere blunder, and what is more, as a most irreligious blunder. Apart from the nature of the emotions which imagined relations to a ghost may arouse in me, there is nothing more "religious" about belief in ghosts than about belief in the Sea-Serpent.

Thus we may perhaps go on to trace the genesis of religious feeling a step further back than we have as yet done, and say that the religious experience is, psychologically, simply the fullest and highest development of the same quality of sincerity and thoroughness by which the competent artisan is distinguished from the botcher and the scholar from the shallow "person of culture." To be absolutely and through and through sincere and in earnest with any interest means already to have put it in the position of an object higher than yourself and necessary to your perfection, and all that is wanted to transform this sense of supreme worth into a truly religious relation to the supremely worthy object is the further consciousness that in some sense it has already been attained, and that you are already, if you only know it, perfect in its perfection.

We may even illustrate and perhaps soften down the apparent paradox of the religious experience, with its consciousness of perfection in imperfection, by an illustration drawn from our relations to those minor objects of devotion which are happily said in popular parlance to be a "religion" to many men. Consider, for instance, the relation of a devoted lover to his mistress. The zest and piquancy of the lover's feelings, if I may so express myself, seem to depend upon the fact that they unite together two apparently incompatible extremes, the extreme of humility and the extreme of conscious perfection. He feels himself, on the one hand, eminently unworthy; by contrast with the perfections which he finds in or ascribes to his beloved, faults and smirches of which the rest of the world take no heed, and of which he himself would in other circumstances be tolerant, if not oblivious, appear as the most monstrous and blackest

choose between the rival deities. In spite of Plato's *φθόνος ἔξω θείου χοροῦ ἵσταται*, "jealousy" appears in some sense an inseparable property of "the gods."

guilt; yet at the same time he equally feels himself as much exalted above the ordinary level of manhood as depressed below it. In so far as he is, momentarily at any rate, in instants of supreme emotional devotion, one in spirit with the beloved object he becomes a conscious sharer in her perfections, and, as one with her, for the moment at least, himself perfect. The world may know him—and rightly as far as the world is concerned—as the average man with all the petty failures and commonplace virtues of the average man, but there is one place at least and one person where and with whom he is, for a time, more than the average man, is purged of his petty vices and lifted into a sphere of emotional life far above that of his everyday virtues. Imagine this contrast of feelings accentuated to the utmost degree by the recognition of the Perfect Universe as the source at once of our abasement and our exaltation, and you have the religious experience in its purest and intensest form.

Thus religion, even if it consists only in worshipping one's mistress or one's mother, is seen to contain a conciliation of two apparently irreconcilable and contradictory forms of emotion—the feeling of self-abasement and humility in the presence of an ideal which is for ever above us and beyond our reach, and the feelings of personal exaltation and personal participation in the perfection of the Ideal. In mere morality this contradiction does not as yet exist, because there the ideal is envisaged simply as an ideal, as something which has not yet and conceivably never may have any existence except "in my head"; in the religious experience the contradiction is essential and inevitable, because here and here only the practical ideal is experienced as something which already exists and moulds us into conformity with itself instead of having to be created by us.

It would be far too long a task, and one utterly beyond my powers, to show how this central paradox reappears in manifold forms in the various systems, orthodox or heretical, in which the practical religious experience of the civilised West has sought expression. The presence of the contradiction in those Pauline writings, which may fairly be called the text-book of Evangelical Protestantism, "leaps to one's eyes," as the French say, upon the most elementary inspection. For Paul and for

Protestantism God is, on the one hand, the infinite being before whom all alike are condemned, and with whom the petty distinctions which men draw between the "just" and the "unjust" man loose all their significance. Thus the "wrath of God" is said by nature to rest on just and unjust alike; by comparison with the perfect real-ideal all mankind, good and bad alike, are in a state of infinite debasement and alienation, which is described as being the consciousness at once of sin and of the law.

This consciousness of "sin" or of the "law" by which sin finds its "occasion" is, it must be noted, something more than the mere despair of actualising the moral ideal of which we have spoken in our last chapter. So long as you are upon the ground and within the sphere of mere morality, the knowledge that your ideal as such can never be completely and adequately realised may indeed give rise to weariness and self-disgust, but not to the bitter sense of being under "condemnation" which arises from the representation of the ideal as being at the same time the one perfect and fully existent reality, apart from which our own life is a mere mockery and semblance. God is thus, on the one hand, a "consuming fire" and a "night in which all cows are black," and the emotion awakened by our consciousness of our relation to the system of which we are inseparable members is one of bitter and hopeless antagonism,—"the wrath of God abideth on us." And yet, on the other hand, for Paul and for Protestantism God is, at the same time, known as perpetually revealing Himself as transcending this opposition, and "reconciling the world with Himself,"—and man, in thus knowing God, passes from the consciousness of absolute enmity and alienation into a consciousness of union with and perfection in the perfect Absolute; the "life of faith on the Son of God" is thus a life in which the believer is already perfect and already free from the law, and the condemnation which the law brings in its train.

"Faith" is, in fact, nothing but the name for the central paradox of the system—the doctrine that by recognising yourself as already perfect in the perfect Absolute you become perfect.

To the thought which has not yet been awakened to the

sense of the contradictions and discrepancies of the merely moral experience, and has therefore felt no need to rise into the higher region of religious life, this paradox must appear unintelligible as well as superfluous, and we need not therefore be surprised if "religion" itself has frequently sought to explain it away. Popular Protestantism, in particular, has always shown a tendency to soften down the antithesis of the Pauline philosophy of religion by representing them as successive phases of the life of the Absolute itself. Readers who have, like myself, been familiar in their youth with the ideas and phraseology of popular evangelical piety, will hardly need to be reminded that in the current forms of the evangelical theory the death of Jesus on the cross is constantly depicted as having wrought some sort of revolution in the Divine nature itself, in virtue of which the angry and alienated Deity for the future became the appeased and self-communicating Deity. No doubt popular piety would recoil from the crude expression of such a view as this in unvarnished language, but, if one may judge from typical products of evangelical devotion, it is this or something like it which most accurately represents the state of mind habitual with evangelically disposed persons when they are not consciously engaged in the elaboration of a quasi-scientific theology.

Such, however, was by no means the thought of Paul. From the point of view of the Pauline epistles, the historical death of Jesus of Nazareth at Jerusalem owes its importance to the fact that it is the most striking illustration in the world's history of a quality or process in the Divine nature which has been present there from all eternity. The real work of redemption, according to the epistles, was already accomplished "before the foundation of the world," and the historical preaching and death of Jesus form a "revelation of the mystery which had been kept in silence through time eternal."[1] Thus, from Paul's standpoint, God's revelation of

[1] Ephesians i. 4. (Even if not actually Pauline the epistle seems on this point a faithful witness to Pauline teaching.) Romans xvi. 25. So elsewhere we read of a "lamb slain from the foundation of the world"—and the voice of modern Pietism exclaims—

"Ich habe nun den Grund gefunden,
Der meinen Anker ewig hält.
Wo anders als in Christi Wunden?
Da lag er vor der Zeit der Welt."

Himself as "Christ,"—that is, as transcending the antithesis between man and God, or as including a perfected humanity as an inseparable ingredient in His own perfection, is not an incident in divine or human history, but the permanent essence of the whole process. "Faith" is thus not the efficient cause of a change in the attitude of God towards an alienated world, but the recognition on the part of the world that no change is needed, and that the conciliation of the imperfect and finite with the perfect Absolute is already effected, and has been effected "from the beginning of the world." We might almost say, "the sense of alienation and condemnation," or, in less theological language, the sense of ourselves as merely imperfect and finite, is an illusion inevitable in virtue of our unique position in the universe; to recognise it for the illusion it is, is to be *eo ipso* aware of ourselves as already perfect and as one, at the roots of our being, with the central reality of the universe.

The Pauline paradox has no doubt been grossly abused by ignorance and superstition, and one would not like to say that the abundance of cheap ridicule which has been showered upon the illiterate evangelist's cry of, "Believe you are saved and you are saved," has not been largely deserved. Yet, against such cheap ridicule, as well as against the more reasoned criticism of the superior person, it is necessary to insist that this conception of myself as already perfect, "as a function of the perfect universe," is the very heart of all vital religion, and "faith," or whatever the name we may give to the recognition of our own perfection as functions of the universe, the indispensable and characteristic organon of the religious experience. To direct and immediate experience the religious life is nothing but the consciousness of transcended alienation and reconciled hostility, in which we know ourselves as one with the life of the Absolute.

And note that the experience which is religion never quite shakes off the form of paradox and contradiction with which it begins. Consciousness of our union with the Absolute by itself would not constitute the specifically religious experience without qualification by the remembrance at least of past and conciliated enmity. The sense of our own limitation and imperfection, even if it has come to be

regarded as an illusion, still persists in and colours our experience of ourselves as already perfected and completed in the Absolute. Blake has hit off this point admirably in the trenchant saying that, "first comes God the Father and fetches you a clout on the head, and then Jesus Christ brings you the balm for it." The essence of a human experience of the Absolute is thus that it should somehow contain together the antithetical moments of conscious imperfection and the conscious transcendence of imperfection; it is an experience of shortcomings made good, of failures which are yet no failures, as the pious say "of sins forgiven." Or, more paradoxical still, it is an experience at once of being "but a man," and of being "more than man." Apart from this never quite abolished contradiction, the religious experience would, as we have already remarked, lose its piquancy. Neither the raptures nor the despondencies of the spirit could subsist if they were not kept alive by an atmosphere of concealed but not obliterated contradiction.

Thus between such experience of the Absolute as is possible to men, and such an experience as might conceivably be enjoyed by beings who had never known the sense of alienation and imperfection, there is, in the nature of things, a great gulf fixed. We shall find it important to remember that neither the experience of the saint nor that of the philosopher can give us "God as He is in His eternal essence before the creation of the world,"—that neither is in fact an ideal "pure" experience of ultimate reality. All that we have a right to expect from either is that it should be valid as far as it goes as a knowledge of reality, or in other words, that we should know where and why they are "impure." This is important, because, as we shall subsequently see, the real ground of the grievance of philosophy and science against the would-be science of theology is that theologians too often persist in treating their own religious experience as an ultimate knowledge of reality valid in all its parts and equally valid for every one, while science in its turn has frequently had an equally serious grievance against the too presumptuous metaphysicians who have insisted on treating the categories of their own or their Master's logic as an all-embracing and adequate description of the full concrete nature of the Absolute.

On both these mistakes we shall presently have a word or two to say. Meanwhile our analysis of the religious experience leads us to the preliminary recognition of it as containing, whatever else it may contain, the last word of practical life in answer to the puzzle raised by reflection on the defects of mere morality. In the object of religion we have an ideal which is at once perfect and actual, at once for ever beyond our attainment and already attained, an end which is at once the adequate fulfilment of all our visions of goodness and beauty and their fulfilment here and now. And, whatever metaphysical criticism may have to say about the possibility of such an object, for practice and the emotions arising out of the life of practice it is ultimate. In its service, and in its service only, is there for the man of action perfect freedom.

The foregoing brief and imperfect sketch may serve, then, to convey some preliminary notion of the leading features of that form of experience to which we seem warranted in confining the name of "religion." But the religious experience, in its form of immediate experience, we must remember, is direct and uncriticised experience, and is not a consistent theory of itself. Thus, like all other forms of immediate experience, it stands in need of corrective and elucidating criticism. Until thus criticised the religious experience, as actually lived through by an individual or a community, is certain to present us with much that is temporary, accidental, or even at variance with the fundamental characteristics of religion side by side with what is of its essence. There is probably no man of practical piety in whose personal experience of religion importance and significance is not attached to matters and ideas which possess no such paramount significance for religious persons of slightly different antecedents and temperament. What is one man's religion may very well be to another man superstition, and both may be fully justified in their point of view. Hence, if the essential and characteristic is to be successfully separated from the superfluous and accidental in religion, there is a necessity for such a process of sifting criticism as is attempted in different degrees and along different lines by the theologian and by the philosopher.

And here I may perhaps be allowed to explain in a few

words why, without intending disrespect to an estimable class of learned men, I have called philosophy a science, but theology a would-be science. The defect which, in my judgment, deprives theology of all claim to the title of a science lies in the arbitrary restriction which its point of departure imposes upon its treatment of the phenomena. Theologians, in fact, sin habitually against Plato's demand that the true lover of science shall be interested in the whole of his subject. Their conception of the religious problem compels them to isolate a part of the religious life of mankind (*e.g.* the religious experiences described in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures),[1] and to treat that part as equivalent to the whole. Such a refusal to face all the facts fully and fairly must in any case vitiate the conclusions arrived at by theology as to the essential nature and requisites of religion, and, as we shall by and by see, it does in particular render the attainment of a clear conception of the difference between morality and religion difficult if not impossible. Hence we are bound, unless we are prepared to renounce our philosophical standards of scientific worth, to maintain, with all possible respect for theologians, and the fullest recognition of the practical and edificatory value of some of their work, that theology, in consequence of the arbitrary restrictions imposed upon its range, possesses only the external form without any of the concrete filling of science, or is, in other words, a pseudo-science.

Philosophy, on the other hand, when applied to the criticism of religious experience, presents, so long as it is true to itself, the leading characteristics of genuine science, which are conspicuously absent from theology. It attempts, at any-rate, to deal with *all* the relevant facts without suppression and without distinction, and it is, unlike theology, freely

[1] The present writer well remembers the shock of amazement which he experienced on opening a so-called "History of Marriage," by a theological author, and finding that the only institutions treated of in the "history" were those recognised by the Levitical and the mediæval canon law. To any one but a theologian the absurdity of confining a "history" of one of the most important of social institutions to the forms it has assumed in two highly complex and relatively late social systems would, one would imagine, have been patent at first sight. It may be, of course, that my account of theology would not be accepted by some writers on the subject as a description of their study. In that case, I can only say, as Socrates says of rhetoric "This may not be what Gorgias teaches, but it is what I understand by the term."

critical of all its original data. Whenever theology attempts to adopt into itself these two characteristics of true scientific method, it alters its own character and passes into such forms as "science of comparative religions" and "philosophy of religion." But these would, I suppose, hardly be recognised by theologians as departments of theology.

To admit, however, that the immediate experiences of religion, like all other immediate experience, stand in need of critical examination before the essential in them can be distinguished from the merely accessory, is to expose ourselves and our own analysis to attacks of a formidable kind from more quarters than one. So long as we were content to offer the statements of the last section simply as a description of an immediate and personal experience, it was, of course, impossible for any one to dispute the accuracy of our account, though he might no doubt question our right to identify such an experience with "religion." But when our own account is given avowedly as the result of an analysis conducted with a view to the separation of the essential from the unessential features of religion, it at once becomes competent to any reader to dispute the correctness of the analysis and to offer a rival analysis of his own.

Hostile criticism of this kind would probably take one of two lines. On the one hand, we might be told that our previous section errs by assuming without proof the validity of the religious experience as a knowledge of reality, and the objective existence of such an Absolute as it presupposes. This, it will be said, is a most unscientific procedure; apart from the "proof" of the "existence of God," the religious experience itself may for all we know prove to be itself a mere illusion, and the Absolute a mere pseudo-concept to which nothing in the world of objective reality, as it would appear to an all-comprehensive experience, corresponds. Both dogmatic pluralism and philosophic Agnosticism would presumably adopt this line of sceptical criticism of what seem to be our assumptions as to the validity of the religious experience.

On the other hand, we might be told that our account of the religious experience is defective in omitting all reference to dogmas such as those of the Trinity and the Incarnation, in

which the religious mind of the Western world has sought to give speculative form to its deepest convictions. These dogmas, it might be urged from the theological quarter, are the very heart of religious experience in its highest and most self-consistent form, and no account of the religious attitude towards the world which leaves them, as yours has done, altogether on one side, can be regarded as having penetrated below the mere surface of the subject.

To deal fully with the criticisms, either of those who think we have assumed too much or those who charge us with having assumed too little, would take us far beyond the limits imposed upon the present chapter both by considerations of space and by our consciousness of our own incompetence; but there are certain general reflections suggested by both lines of criticism which seem sufficiently relevant and sufficiently important to be entered upon in some little detail here. And first, we will take certain considerations arising out of the demand of the sceptic for a formal *proof* of the validity of the religious experience and the actual existence of the perfect Absolute.

The points upon which some explanation of our attitude seems demanded appear to be in the main two: (*a*) What kind of *proof* of the validity of religious experience is admissible or requisite? (*b*) In what sense, if any, is it true that the religious experience goes beyond what can be absolutely *proved* as to the nature of reality, and is such a transcending of mere reason ever legitimate? More briefly, the questions we have to consider are, (*a*) that of the proofs of the existence of God, and (*b*) that of the relation of "faith" to "reason." On each of these perplexed questions we shall, in order to avoid misunderstanding, have a word of explanation to give, and our attitude to the second will be in the main decided by our answer to the first.

We begin then with (*a*) the question as to the necessity and admissibility of *proof of the being of God*. In discussing this question we must first of all point out two ambiguities against which philosophers have not always been on their guard. The first source of ambiguity lies in the very vague and elastic character of the concepts commonly suggested by the use of the term "God." In order not unduly to narrow

the scope of our examination of religious phenomena by an initial assumption, of the theological kind, we must from the first take care to recognise that, at least at the beginning of the enquiry, the term "God" means for us simply the perfect system which is the finally adequate object of religious worship, and nothing more. Whether that system is personal or not, and if personal, whether it exists in the form of a single consciousness or a society of consciousnesses, in what sense it is identical with or different from "nature"—all these controversial questions, which are commonly supposed to set an impassable barrier between Monotheism, Polytheism, and Pantheism, must be left for the present undiscussed. What we have assumed as real in our statements about the religious experience is not the personality or impersonality, the "transcendence" or "immanence," of the perfect Absolute, but simply its existence as a perfect systematic whole, and in styling that Absolute "God" we intend to imply no decision as to the points that might conceivably occasion dispute between a Platonist and an Aristotelian, or between a disciple of Spinoza and a follower of Leibnitz.

The second ambiguity against which we must enter a caution arises from the fact that a "proof of the being of God" may mean either of two very different things. It may mean either a proof that there is an Absolute or all-comprehending universal order, or a proof that that order is all that religious devotion takes it to be. That which is "proved" to exist may, in fact, be merely the Absolute of metaphysics, or it may be the "God" of religion. Now between these two conceptions there is an important difference. If you take metaphysics in the most general sense as the analysis of the formal characteristics of experience, apart from all consideration of its concrete contents, it is manifest that all that metaphysics demands of its Absolute world-system is that it should satisfy the logical demand for comprehensiveness and freedom from contradiction. Hence, if the formal character of experience only be under consideration, you will find that you can say little more on purely general grounds about the Absolute than that it includes all the facts which would form the contents of a completed and "pure" experience, and contains them all

without any internal contradiction. Further consideration of the general nature of experience would probably lead to the further assertion that the Absolute itself not only contains the contents of experience, but is itself a sentience, awareness, or experiencing. For the contents of experience do not seem to have any existence except *as* contents of experience—that is, as elements or aspects in a consciousness of some kind or other. But beyond this you could scarcely go in any account of the Absolute without passing from the consideration of the formal characteristics of experience to the examination of its contents, which is the business, in the first place, of the various empirical sciences, and in the next of the applied metaphysics which is based upon the critical examination of the assumptions and results of those sciences.

Hence it might well be that a conception of the world-system against which no exception could be taken upon grounds of general metaphysics might be entirely inadequate as a description of the God or Absolute of the religious experience. This would be the case with any system of philosophy in which the metaphysical Absolute, though conceived of as a single all-embracing system fully satisfying our speculative demand for logical coherence, was regarded as not satisfying our ethical demand for a really existing object adequately realising our ideals of practical and emotional perfection.[1] On any consistent theory of pessimism there would seem to be such an impassable gulf between the desire of the heart and the knowledge of the head; and thus no argument for the existence of such an Absolute as is compatible with the truth[2] of pessimism would amount to a proof of the being of God—that is, of the existence of an Absolute which, as answering our ethical demand for felt perfection, forms an adequate centre for the religious emotions.

When we speak, then, in the present context of the proofs

[1] By "emotional perfection" I mean entire and complete satisfaction of desire, realisation of judgments of approbation, etc. I use the perhaps awkward expression in order to avoid the ambiguities connected with the much abused phrase "*moral perfection*."

[2] *I.e.*, the *final* truth of pessimism, as the last word about the relation of man and human aspirations to the real. I say nothing against the relative truth of pessimism regarded simply as *one* aspect of the facts of life—only against its claim to have taken account of the whole.

of the being of God, it must be understood that we mean such proofs only as, if accepted, would establish the existence of an Absolute of a kind adequate to our highest ethical ideas—a real centre and sum not merely of formal or logical but also of emotional perfection. The question then is, In what sense does the existence of such an Absolute admit or require proof? To this question there seems to be only one consistent and intelligible answer. The only "proof of the being of God" which is really necessary or admissible is the existence of the religious experience itself as an important element or aspect within the concrete whole of human life and experience. The true answer to the sceptic who denies that the reality of things presents any aspect corresponding to the characteristic ideas of religion is provided by the regularity and permanence with which the religious side of life and the religious experience assert themselves as ineradicable elements in human nature.

A proof that the object of religious worship exists is, in the strict sense of the words, as impossible, and for the same reason, as a proof that colour or extension, or right and wrong, or any other characteristic aspect of human experience, is "real." Just as our colour experiences or our ethical experiences are themselves the only available or necessary evidence for the existence of colour or of ethical aspirations as features of the concrete world-system, so the religious experience itself is the only evidence which is forthcoming or desirable for the qualification of the experienced system by the attributes in virtue of which it is felt to be a suitable object for religious devotion. This does not mean to say that every and any fancy of every and any individual may at once be asserted to be objectively valid with respect to the real world-system, but only that no abiding and universal aspect of human experience taken as a whole can be airily dismissed by the metaphysician as resting upon mere illusion. In one form or another the religious attitude towards the world-system seems as inseparable from a fully developed intelligent human experience as the ethical or the scientific, and this is, of itself, sufficient evidence that, whatever may be the accretions with which it is overlaid and disfigured in its various transitory guises, the religious experience in its permanent essence is an inseparable element in a comprehensive human experience of

the world. And this is all that can be said of the scientific or any other aspect of the world of experience.

In this sense the "ontological proof" seems valid and irrefragable: How indeed, may we ask, could we understand the production by nature of a race of beings inevitably doomed to believe about the world things which they themselves know, on mature reflection, to be utterly and radically false? Such an impassable gulf between the nature of man as experience and the nature of the world as that which he experiences, is not only unthinkable in itself, but, even if thinkable, might with equal reason be supposed to extend to the scientific as well as to the religious aspect of human experience. The true inference from the premisses of those who contend that the religious experience may be at once an essential feature of human experience, and yet radically false and baseless as an apprehension of reality, is not that some other aspect of human experience, *e.g.* the experiences upon which the mechanical theory of nature is formed, is valid through and through as an adequate knowledge of reality, but that all sides and aspects of our experience are alike suspect. What is sauce for the goose of religion is no less sauce for the gander of mechanical physical science.

The "ontological proof," then, seems sound and valid in the sense just explained—*i.e.* in the sense that the claim of religion to represent an integral element in a full human experience of the world is justified by an appeal to the facts of life. At the same time, it must be remembered that, as we have so often insisted, the religious experience is in principle an immediate apprehension, not a reflective knowing, much less a fully thought-out and critical theory about reality. Hence, if the "ontological proof" were used, as it commonly has been, to vindicate not merely the right of the religious experience to rank as an indispensable aspect in full human experience, but the right of some particular theological theory about the nature of the object of religious emotions to be adopted as true without further inquiry, the "ontological" argument would be abused for illegitimate purposes. The ontological proof, rightly understood, establishes not so much the existence of "God" as the existence of the "divine," as an aspect of the world system. Whether the "divine" and

"perfect" is to be regarded as "personal" or not, whether it is immanent in the perpetual universe, or, as Aristotle taught, "separate," whether moral predicates can properly be ascribed to it in the same sense in which they are ascribed to members of human society, whether the experience of the "divine" given in religion is the highest and most coherent experience possible to man, or is itself in turn transcended by the experience of the philosopher, precisely as it transcends the merely ethical experience,—all these are questions which cannot be settled by any short and easy "ontological" method, but only, if at all, by careful analysis of the concrete contents of experience.

One very common abuse of the "ontological" and the other "proofs of the being of God" calls perhaps for special mention here. It is important to insist that the religious experience itself is not only the sufficient but the necessary and only "proof" of its own reality. If by a "proof of the being of God" you mean a proof of a kind competent to convince a man who is personally an absolute stranger to the religious experience of the validity of that experience, there never was and there never can be any such proof. To convince a man who, like not a few of our contemporaries, is personally devoid of religious aspirations and emotions that there is "a God," would be like trying to convince a being devoid of the experiences of approbation and disapprobation that there is a difference between right and wrong, or a stone-deaf man that there is a difference between harmony and discord. In the absence of the individual religious experience a man might conceivably be satisfied by the evidence for the existence of a metaphysical Absolute or of a theological "Creator of the world;" but a mere "Absolute" or a mere "Creator" is, as we have said, something very different from what religion means by "God." That the Absolute or Creator, or whatever else one may on other grounds believe in as the ultimate reality for scientific thought, is also "God," we can only show by pointing to the fact that it does, in the religious experiences of mankind, fill the place which the merely "ethical" and therefore unrealisable ideal left empty. It is only in the religious experience itself that we take the step which bridges over the gulf between the "Absolute" or "First

Cause" of scientific speculation and the "God" of practical religion.

But it has too often been the fate of the "proofs of the being of God" to be used as evidence to show that the "Absolute" is "God" *outside* the religious experience. Not only have they been regarded as competent to prove the existence of God to an unreligious world, but I am much mistaken if some readers at least will not assert that the whole of the present section has been an *ignoratio elenchi*, and that the question as to the existence of God is really the question, which we have hitherto evaded, of the independent reality of the objects of the religious experience *outside* that experience.

What I want to know, I can imagine a reader exclaiming, is whether God, as I take Him to be, exists outside and independently of my thinking about Him, or whether He is only an "idea in my head." Now this demand for evidence of the reality of the objects of religious devotion outside the religious experience itself, is exactly on a par with the similar demand for the *independent* existence of the objects of other forms of experience. To ask whether God as such has an independent existence, apart from my thought about Him and my worship of Him, is to raise the very question which the ordinary philosophic realist raises when he asks indignantly whether things in the physical world exist when I am not perceiving them or not. And in both cases the question is so ambiguously worded that, without further definition of its meaning, it is impossible to give a single answer to it. Hence I must be pardoned if, with no desire to equivocate or to split hairs, I am forced to draw a distinction before I can explain my attitude to the question at issue.

The question, "Does God exist independently of my thinking, or is He only an idea in my head?" *might* mean (*a*) Are the contents of my religious experience mere subjective fancies personal and peculiar to myself, or have they universal and objective validity as expressing the experience not merely of myself but of all religiously-minded persons? In just the same way we may interpret the question as to the objective reality of any experience-content whatever to mean, "Would

this content form part of the experience of others *under the conditions in which I believe myself to be experiencing it?*" To answer this question in the affirmative is to assert that the experience, or rather the judgment in which the experience is expressed, has objective validity for all men or all normal men; *i.e.* that the conditions of its being an experience-content do not include any unrecognised psycho-physical idiosyncrasy in virtue of which I am differently constituted from other men; to answer it in the negative is virtually to admit the presence, among the conditions upon which the experience depends, of psycho-physical peculiarities (*e.g.* colour-blindness, clairvoyance, etc.) which are special to myself, or, at any rate, are not shared by any but the abnormal few.

Now, clearly, it is a matter of some importance whether or not my religious experiences, and the propositions in which they are formulated, have objective reality in this sense of the word. And clearly again our answer to the question, even when defined in this way, must be at once Yes and No. Manifestly, in so far as my religious experience embodies the true essential features of the religious life of humanity, undistorted by accidental accretions and excrescences, there will be an identical element of content in my experiences and those of others. On the other hand, not only must the experiences of any individual present this identical element in connection with other elements peculiar to himself, and derived from the special circumstances of original psycho-physical structure, social environment, early training, etc., but the peculiar and characteristic experiences of the supremely religious person must, like the experiences of every genius, contain much that transcends the experience of the ordinary man and is incommunicable to him.

Ultimately, then, the only test whether the special characteristics of the religious as of any other experience of an individual have objective validity, in the sense above explained, or are merely subjective, must be whether or not, so far as they can be made accessible to others, they are found by the normal man of piety to tally with and absorb into themselves, or to contradict the principal features of his own religious experience. Thus the religious experiences of a Christ or a Paul must, we may all believe, have

been of a kind as unintelligible to ordinary men as the experiences in which philosophical truths dawned upon Plato or dramatic or musical compositions upon Shakespeare and Mozart. But where we can follow what Christ and Paul have told us of the workings of their own minds, we can to some extent see that the thoughts which formed the content of their to us unimaginable experiences tally with our own experience, which they illumine and transform and free from contradictions without abolishing it.

On the other hand, the experiences of the vulgar religious fanatic, if taken as an adequate apprehension of reality, would contradict and abolish without illuminating or transcending the religious experiences of the normal man of piety. Hence, with certain modifications, our answer to the question whether the religious experience has objective validity, in the sense now under consideration, must be given affirmatively so far as the abiding and essential features of that experience are concerned, while the peculiar forms it takes in individuals, conditioned as they are by the peculiarities of external environment and personal idiosyncrasy, must be pronounced of mere subjective worth. To this latter point we shall presently have occasion to return.

(*b*) But the question, "Does God exist independently of and outside our thought of Him?" often means, "Does God exist, as God, entirely outside the religious experience of mankind?" and in this sense must, as I take it, meet with a decided negative. The question, so interpreted, is indeed only a special case of the more general question, "Is *anything* what it is known as being, outside the experience in which it is so known?" To answer this question fully would take us much deeper into metaphysical controversy than we can reasonably desire to go in a work of which metaphysics is neither the only nor the principal subject, but we must, at any rate, briefly indicate the conclusions which would naturally follow from the view which has been enunciated in our opening chapter as to the scope and the methods of metaphysics.

If our original conception of the metaphysical problem was a correct one, it is clear that metaphysics can never reveal to us any existence entirely beyond or entirely independent of an experience in which it forms an inseparable aspect. As

we have indicated already, the whole problem of metaphysics is to construct a description of the world of experience which shall answer to our ideal of "pure" experience—that is, shall contain no single element which cannot be completely described in terms of experienced fact. Just in so far as metaphysics or any other branch of science departs from this ideal, and employs in its theories concepts which cannot be resolved into descriptions of experienced fact, it ceases to be fully and completely true and becomes infected to an unknown degree with errors and false assumptions, which it is the work of scientific progress to remove. Thus, as against certain forms of philosophic Realism, we feel bound to maintain that metaphysics is incapable of ever transcending that reference to actual or possible experience which is involved in every assertion about existence. What *is* means for us, as for the plain man, what is or what would, under definitely known conditions, be experienced by a consciousness, and wherever we find science and philosophy apparently transcending these limits, and informing us of the existence of objects which, from their nature, cannot as such be contents of any experience, we expect to detect the presence in scientific theory of "symbolic" and unreal concepts.[1]

We maintain, then, that taking existence in the full and proper sense of the terms, nothing ever *is*, outside the concrete experience in which it is an ingredient, what it is within that experience. The utmost reality that can be conceded to any object of experience outside the experience in which it is known, is the reality of certain conditions which, with the

[1] Much confusion has been caused by failure to observe that "existence" is, as Aristotle long ago taught, an ambiguous term. It has been thought, for instance, a sufficient refutation of Berkeley to vociferate that the chairs and tables in my room do not cease to "exist" if I go out and lock the door on the outside. But the real question at issue is of course not whether the chairs and tables, *in some sense or other*, continue to exist, but whether they retain their existence *as chairs and tables*. An intelligent Berkeleyan would of course admit that the furniture of his room continues to exist in his absence, but would at the same time insist that, since their existence *as chairs and tables* implies presence to a human organism, they are, in the absence of a human percipient or some similar subject of experience, resolved into their, to us, unknown conditions, which, when the presence of a suitable percipient is added, generate the perceived chairs and tables. In Leibnitian phraseology the chairs and tables might be called *phenomena bene funduta*. They are, that is, no mere illusions, they have an existence outside our finite perception, but not an independent existence *as chairs and tables*. You may of course say, if you like, "this *is* a chair," meaning "this, under the condition that a human percipient is present, is perceived as a chair," but in that case, as H. Cornelius has well insisted, you are using "existence" in a secondary and derivative, not in its full and primary sense.

addition of the further condition of certain psychological dispositions in the percipient, will yield the experience of the object in question. And by the reality of these "conditions" we must once more mean, unless we are to play fast and loose with words, their presence as an ingredient in some other experience. We cannot too strongly insist that of "existence," in any full sense of the word, we can form no notion whatever except as forming the content of an experience. As Mr. Bradley puts it, "being" is indissolubly one with "sentience." That this truth is so frequently denied by realists and misconceived by idealists[1] is probably to be accounted for by the general prevalence of a most unfortunate error in philosophical order. If, instead of treating experience as a kind of knowing, metaphysicians had treated knowing as a kind of experience, it would have been less easy to mistake the mere symbols of inadequate conceptual thought for transcendently real things existing outside of, and independently of, the experience in which they are thought of.

Turning from these generalities to the special question of the "existence of God," we must then dismiss the demand for a proof that God as God exists outside the religious experience as based upon a fundamental misconception of the meaning of existence and its relation to experience. Apart from the felt reality of the religious life as a permanent aspect of human experience, God, we are driven to say, would be not God but a merely logical or metaphysical Absolute or system. It is only in our own recognition of the Absolute as being the actually existing realisation of our ethical ideals, and the perfecting of our moral shortcomings and limitations, that the Absolute becomes what we mean by "God." "God" is, in fact, we may fairly say, a relative term, and implies, as a part of its meaning, a certain relation to human aspirations and human affections. Until the Absolute enters upon that relation to human or other similarly limited experiences it is not as yet, except as a secondary and derivative sense, actually

[1] At least I never read the writings of what may be called the "orthodox" Anglo-Hegelian school without a certain suspicion that the writers are unconsciously at one with certain realists on this point. Professor Green, for instance, certainly seems to assume that the *full* reality of the physical world is something which the mechanical philosopher can construct by "thought," but which from its very nature could *never* be the object of direct perception.

God; and when it is said that only the Absolute is fully and truly God, the meaning is that only the Absolute can permanently stand the strain of occupying the place of God in that relation to human experiences without breaking down under it.

But for this inability of minor objects of devotion to afford lasting religious emotion to mankind in general, it would be perfectly reasonable to maintain that there are as many "Gods" as there are objects which are recognised as supremely perfect by human individuals. What we mean, however, by calling religious devotion to these lesser "Gods" idolatry is that (*a*) they are capable of serving as "Gods" only for an individual or for a small number of individuals, not for mankind in general without respect of age, sex, or nation, and that (*b*) they rarely prove permanently adequate to retain their religious devotion even on an individual. The man who makes an "idol" of his mistress, his friend, or even his country, is commonly disillusioned before he dies.

We may even say then that, in a sense, the religious experience must be regarded as adding an important element to the life not only of man, but also of the Absolute itself. If man is not fully man until he has learned to worship, God too is not fully God until man has learned to worship Him. It is only in the experience in which each member of the antithesis is fully interpenetrate and saturate with the other, that both God and man can be said to have their full concrete existence. And we might therefore, not without reason, write an imaginary history of the religious experience in its various phases of development, from either standpoint—that of God or that of man. From the standpoint of man that development would, of course, take the appearance of a gradual approximation to the true apprehension of the full character of the Absolute. This character would, for the purposes of such a history, of course be taken as given once for all, and each stage in the progressive evolution of an intelligent and ethical religion would be regarded as a further advance towards a worthy view of a pre-existing divine nature. But the story might, with equal justification, be told from the divine side as a narrative of progressive self-revelation. In this version of the tale it would be the psychological constitution of man that would be

taken at the outset as given, and the various stages of religious development would thus assume the appearance of steps in the "evolution of God," from an earliest beginning as mere brute force or power over a restricted part of nature to his culmination in the ideal of ethical perfection.

But, though either standpoint might be taken for the purpose of the story neither would really express the full truth. The fact which such narratives partially represent is the union of the divine and the human consciousness in a single concrete experience. The moment we abstract from this complete union and attempt to treat God and man as two independent realities external to each other, and needing to be brought into relation with one another, we have deserted the clear light of experience and philosophy for the half lights and coloured shadows of theosophic superstition.[1] The truth would be to say that, as a function of the perfect Absolute, the divine-human consciousness, like every other function of the Absolute, is always and permanently perfect, and capable neither of evolution nor of progress; as a process in time, like every other such process, the divine-human consciousness passes through an evolution which may, with equal accuracy and with equal inaccuracy, be called the evolution either of its divine or of its human side. In this sense, and in this sense only, can we talk with theosophical philosophers like Schelling (in his later years) of the "evolution of God."

We must, of course, take care to remember that any such "evolution," besides belonging to the divine-human consciousness only in its character of a process in time and not in its quality or nature as a function of the perfect Absolute, is also purely relative to the development of life and intelligence on our planet. We have no warrant for speaking of a general "evolution" of the religious experience all over the universe, since, for all we know, there may from the very first have been intelligent beings whose experience of the divine was all and more than all man's has in the course of centuries come to be.

These reflections lead us to make some very brief remarks upon a topic closely connected with that which we have just been discussing—the relation of "faith" to "reason." Our

[1] Cf. Bradley, *Principles of Logic*, p. 97.

insistence upon the absence of any other proof of the existence of God than that afforded by the religious experience itself naturally leads to the question what is the relation between that experience and our scientific knowledge? In denying that there can be such a thing as a demonstration of the existence of God which would afford conviction to a logically minded man devoid of all trace of the religious experience, we have clearly up to a certain point at least been occupying common ground with those who assert that "religious faith" is something other than scientific knowledge, and that we might apprehend by "faith" objects of which scientific knowledge is not aware. For fear that such a position might be interpreted to mean that religious "faith" is justified in freely assuming the truth of irrational or unmeaning propositions in theology we must, even at the risk of prolixity, explain more fully in what we take the difference between faith and reason to consist. This difference has only too often been ruinously misconceived when the mistake has been made of treating all experiences as forms of knowledge or thought instead of treating thought and knowledge as forms of experience. It has, for instance, sometimes been even maintained that we may be assured by "faith" of that which is contradictory of knowledge and reason, and the most patently irrational of theological dogmas have been defended by an appeal to the supposed "relativity" of our knowledge.

I shall not here digress into a superfluous onslaught upon the now happily defunct fetish of "relativity," but shall content myself with the remark that, even supposing the doctrine of "relativity" in the sense assumed by this argument to be true,—and I can see absolutely no reason whatever for making the supposition,—such "relativity" would attach to *all* the terms by which human beings attempt to conceive the world, to those employed by theologians in stating and defending the doctrines which they claim to have received by revelation no less than those employed by philosophers who more modestly confine themselves to the analysis of experience. And, even were it not so, it is manifestly illogical to use the supposed universal "relativity" of human knowledge as an argument for discrediting any particular piece of knowledge as compared with the rest.

Were all my knowledge merely "relative," that would, no doubt, be a remarkable and unfortunate circumstance, but it would not absolve me from the intellectual and moral duty of making the best of such "relative" information as I possess. What, for instance, could be more illogical or more immoral than to treat such relative knowledge of the qualities of things as experience affords me as trustworthy in all other cases, but to distrust experience just at the point where it informs me that bread and wine which a priest has consecrated remain just what they were before? If "relative" knowledge is good enough to warrant me in trusting my senses in other cases, it should be equally valid here; if it breaks down here, it is not entitled to credit anywhere.

It is perhaps a more common contention that faith, though not "contrary to," may be "above" reason. Now if this means that faith may be appealed to as an authority for propositions which are, to the best of our judgment, in conflict with reason, it is simply the statement we have just criticised repeated in less paradoxical language. There is, however, a sense in which the statement that faith, though not contrary to reason, transcends reason, may fairly be maintained. It seems to me to contain an important element of truth—an element which I shall in what follows attempt to particularise.

The most important difference between "faith" and "reason" seems to be that "reason," in the sense intended in the popular antithesis, is a form of knowledge, but "faith" is not. "Faith," if by faith we mean the characteristically religious experience, it must never be forgotten, is a form of direct and immediate apprehension, and should in this respect be compared rather with perception than with any conceptual form of consciousness. "Reason," on the other hand, is always reflective, critical of and systematising the material which is supplied to it by the various forms of immediate apprehension, such as perception, æsthetic enjoyment, and moral or religious intuition. It is not only religion but every form of direct apprehension of which we ought to say that they contain something "beyond" reason. For none of our experiences of direct apprehension of reality are ever fully and adequately embodied in the reflective and critical statements of reasoned theory.

In perception of the material world, in the apprehension of an æsthetic content, in the direct consciousness of moral obligation, as well as in the experiences of religion, there is always more present than can be taken up into the theoretical accounts of these experiences with which reason deals. In taking its material at second-hand for the purpose of working it up into the form of general theoretical propositions, reason has always to simplify that material by conscious or unconscious abstraction and selection. In this way reason and theory always toil *longo intervallo* after direct and immediate apprehension of reality. It is the cardinal sin of the Hegelian philosophy to disregard or deny this dependence of reason upon a material originally supplied by more concrete forms of consciousness, and to treat reason as though it were itself directly and immediately apprehensive or even creative of its own contents. From this misconception as to the relation of "reason" or "thought" to the material with which it deals, it is easy to pass to the further error of supposing the logical categories by the aid of which thought systematises its material to be the actual concrete contents of the experienced world.[1]

In the sense, then, that "faith," as a form of direct and immediate apprehension of a certain aspect of the experienced world, always contains more than the systems of reasoned and reflective general propositions which make up our philosophical "theories," faith must certainly be admitted to transcend reason. There is much more in the religious experiences of the pious man than could ever be got within the compass of a "philosophy of religion," just as there is, in the meanest and dullest man's direct perceptual experience of the natural world, a wealth of detail and colour by the side of which the most complicated and elaborate constructions of theoretical physics seem abstract and meagre, or again as there is always in a great work of art something more than can be detected and "accounted for" by the subtlest æsthetic analysis.

But for these unexplored remainders our interest, whether in art, in nature, or in religion, could not retain its character

[1] Half the supposed difficulties of "idealism" disappear with the simple recognition that it is not "thought" but "experience," or, as Berkeley would have said, "percipere" that is the ultimate metaphysical reality.

permanently, as we see it does. If it were ever possible for us to account for and describe by reference to a combination of general laws the *full* character of the concrete perceived phenomena of nature, our interest in watching the actual course of nature would be gone. If we could fully and completely ascertain every relation of form or proportion which contributes to our enjoyment of a picture or a symphony, the picture and the symphony would thenceforth become incapable of ministering to our æsthetic satisfaction. And so, in the case of the religious experience, if we could reduce it in all its concrete fulness and individuality to a series of general scientific propositions, our interest in it *as a form of direct experience* would be gone.

And, in the case of any particular form of the religious experience, *e.g.* the ideas and emotions awakened by the historical influence of a great religious genius, to have ascertained with exactitude precisely what and how much its philosophical significance is, and what are its limitations and defects, is to have already passed beyond the stage of intellectual development at which that religion is really our religion. It is for this reason that no one, as Renan has said, can write the history of a religion unless he has first believed and then ceased to believe in it. And for the same reason the metaphysician, in the moments when he is metaphysicising at any rate, finds himself precluded from reposing absolute religious faith even in the religious systems which he judges to be on the whole the truest. In criticising and evaluating a religious system he inevitably sets himself so far above it. It is just because no religious *system*, *i.e.* no body of reasoned and reflective conclusions attained by reflection at second-hand upon the religious experience, can succeed in exhausting the full contents of that experience as it is directly and immediately felt, that philosophic and scientific criticism, though fatal to religions, leave religion as such untouched.

It is important, however, to note what is *not* properly involved in this transcendency of faith over reason. Faith, if our conception of the case be correct, transcends reason only as every form of direct apprehension of reality transcends the second-hand theorising of reflective thought upon itself. It transcends reason, in fact, just because it is not, like reason, a

form of "knowing," but is a form of "experiencing," "feeling," or "being." We have seen no reason to assume that faith transcends reason in the further sense that its contents, if they could be exhaustively reduced to systematic conceptual form, would be found to be in conflict with the characteristics of coherency and freedom from contradiction which are the fundamental and the only postulates of reason.

Our view, in fact, may be briefly stated thus. In so far as there is always more in any form of direct and immediate experience than can be adequately represented in the conceptual or "thought" form, all experience transcends reason or is "ultra-rational." But, on the other hand, so far as the contents of direct apprehension are progressively reflected upon and embodied in the form of general propositions and universal concepts, it would be a contradiction in terms to maintain that they do or can transcend "reason." There may well always be something more to *know* in the world of direct experience than what we as yet know about it, but to assert that what we actually know about it is "beyond reason" would, if it meant anything at all, amount to saying that one and the same proposition is adequate knowledge and is self-contradictory.

Hence, though religion may fairly claim to be "above reason," theology must not. For the propositions of theology belong not to immediate experience but to second-hand reflection, critical and analytical, of the data of immediate experience. Hence, as reflective thought, the propositions of theology have no more claim than the propositions of geometry or arithmetic to override the demand of the human intelligence for the subjection of everything that is presented to it as knowledge to the fundamental postulates of reason as expressed, for instance, in the laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middle. Where the religious experience transcends reason it also, and for the same reason, transcends theology. Hence we are bound, in the interests of intellectual honesty, to reject the claim of any theological systematisation at second-hand of the facts or alleged facts of the religious experience to be more exempt from philosophical criticism than any other pretended branch of knowledge. To make the fact that the religious experience is itself something far more than a mere

knowing into an excuse for asserting that the speculative doctrines of a particular theology are at once "mysteries," *i.e.* statements apparently irreconcilable with the postulates of reason—and "truths," *i.e.* pieces of adequate knowledge, is either dishonest or stupid.

The case would, of course, be different if it was admitted that the mysterious character of these doctrines was due merely to our inability to form any but inadequate and "symbolic" conceptions of the facts of the religious experience; but to make this admission would be, of course, to concede that these doctrines, where they are "mysteries," are not absolutely true, and, if they could be stated in an absolutely true form, would cease to be "mysteries." And though the language of theologians occasionally suggests this interpretation of their view as to the place of "mystery" in religion, their readiness to treat any open recognition of the inevitable element of falsehood implied in the existence of a "mystery" as heresy strongly suggests that they may use the more reasonable forms of expression from failure to perceive the nature of their logical implications.

In a word, faith transcends reason because faith is a form of direct experience, and the form of reason or "knowing" is ultimately inadequate to the full representation of experience. But when faith is made the starting-point for reasoned reflection and theory about experience there is no more ground for treating the propositions at which we arrive by the process of theological reflection as "above reason" than for extending the same generosity to the propositions of algebra or mechanics. In fact, if we retain for purposes of convenience in our *Religions-Philosophie* concepts and propositions involving "mysteries" which are really "above reason," we ought, as in the similar case of the "imaginary" quantities of algebra, or the "imaginary points" of geometry, to recognise these "mysteries" as a metaphorical and "symbolic," and therefore ultimately untrue, representation of realities, which the limitations of our experience do not enable us to perceive in their real character.[1]

[1] Of course faith transcends reason in the sense that if we had no religious experience we could not arrive at the "knowledge of God" by reasoning from experiences of a different type. But equally does geometry transcend reason, in the sense that mere thought would never lead to a knowledge of the geometrical properties of things apart from the direct experience of space. I have not troubled

So much then by way of answer to the first class of objectors to our attitude towards the religious experience. To the other class of critics, whom we supposed to object to the absence from our description of the data before us of the peculiar theological doctrines of any special religion, we can fortunately reply, after the foregoing explanation, with much greater brevity. Our reason for constructing our account of the religious experience in independence of theology will now, we hope, be patent. It is simply the fact, so often insisted upon in the last few pages, that theology is one thing and immediate religious experience another. Every theological doctrine, from that of the existence of the Deity upwards, is not a direct experience of what is immediately experienced in the religious life, but a theory as to what non-experienced facts may be inferred from the experiences of that life. And, as men's inferences from the immediate experiences of religion are usually unconsciously affected by the importation into their analysis of those experiences of vast quantities of irrelevant pre-conceptions derived from other sources, it constantly comes about that one and the same typical form of religious experience is found in connection with very different or even bitterly antagonistic theological beliefs.

A pious man, whose theological creed has been, as is most often the case, simply accepted from society around him, would probably be immensely surprised to find how few of its articles stand in any perceivable connection with his actual religious experiences,[1] and how many of them depend for any assurance which he feels as to their truth upon entirely non-religious considerations. And we should therefore get an altogether false and distorted view of the contents of the religious experience if we allowed ourselves to include in the facts

to discuss the relation of reason to faith when faith is understood, as it often is, as a mere readiness to believe historical statements as to matters of fact, such as, *e.g.*, those of the Gospels about the birth or resurrection of Jesus, upon evidence less cogent than that which would be accepted in any other similar case by the man of science or the historian. I can see nothing religious in this readiness to believe a statement on insufficient evidence, and I am sure it is immoral. It is, of course, no part of my business to express any opinion as to whether the evidence, in the instance just specified, is or is not adequate.

[1] The theology of Sheikh Sa'di has few points of contact with that of a modern evangelical, but it would not be hard to select from the Gulistan and Bustan more than one expression of religious feeling which might have been penned by the most fervent of evangelicals. Cf. the incident in the mosque at Baalbec related in *Gulistan* II. 10.

which demand primary analysis any of the numerous theories as to what is not directly experienced by which men have sought to explain or to augment the contents of their actual and direct experience. The first precaution to be taken by a philosophical analysis based like our own upon the recognition of the description of facts in terms of "pure" experience as the ideal of explanation, must manifestly be to guard against the unconscious perversion of our data by the inclusion among the primary facts of theories originally begotten by conscious or unconscious reflection, and then read back into the facts from which they were derived.

Of course, in a complete "Philosophy of Religion upon the basis of Pure Experience," it would be necessary to describe, not only the primary facts of religious experience, but the genesis of theological beliefs out of reflection upon those facts either alone or in connection with others, and the subsequent modifications undergone by religious experience when such beliefs come to be read back into it. But for the purposes of our essay, in which we are concerned only with the most essential and the characteristic features of the religious experience as an aspect in universal human life, the primary facts are the all-important things, and we cannot be too careful to guard against the introduction into our account of them of anything secondary or "parochial."

And further, our refusal to admit the peculiar doctrines of any theology among the data of our enquiry will receive fresh justification from the consideration that the religious experience as it actually exists in the individual consciousness is itself something individual, unique, and incommunicable. For this reason, useful as general doctrinal statements may be as indicating what are the most characteristic features of religious experience regarded universally, no theological system can be an adequate representation of the religious experience of any individual except its original author, even within the limits imposed by the general inadequacy of reflective thought to direct experience. In order that theological ideas might correspond as adequately as it is possible for mere ideas ever to correspond to direct experience, it would be necessary for every man to make his theology for himself. And this is precisely what the great religious mystics of all ages have

consciously or unconsciously attempted to do. Hence, from the point of view of *Religions-Philosophie*, theological systems are primarily of value as affording a clue to the personal experiences of the eminent men who have originated them, or the ages of which they are characteristic.

The doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, is perhaps of less value to *Religions-Philosophie* as a metaphysical speculation than as throwing light upon the mental life of an Athanasius and of the age and profession of which Athanasius was a typical figure. In the same way the speculations and fancies of great heretical mystics, such as Blake and Swedenborg, though presumably of no importance to the theologian, may have for the philosopher the same kind of significance, as throwing light upon characteristic phases of the religious experience, as the recognised doctrines of orthodox systems. It would indeed be ground for wonder if an experience so conditioned in its genesis and growth by the special circumstances of the individual's position and constitution could in all or the majority of individuals find adequate expression in the self same mythical or dogmatic form. Hence we constantly find excessively strict orthodoxy accompanied either by stupidity or by religious indifference, or by both. It is, I suppose, almost inevitable that a man whose religious experiences are deep and vital should find himself at some point or other openly or secretly at variance with the orthodoxy of his age, and that quite irrespective of the merits of that orthodoxy considered simply as a body of speculative propositions in metaphysics.

And this intimate relation between vigorous mental life and "heresy" is by no means exemplified only in the religious sphere. It is equally true in morals, in art, and I conceive even in the realm of purely scientific theory and hypothesis. It is only the unintelligent or the indifferent who can go through life contentedly with a set of convictions, or rather of opinions, exactly like every one else's; real individuality, such as springs from freshness of immediate experience or thoroughness of reflection, is bound to lead to peculiarities of judgment which will be called heresies by those who are not so constituted as to sympathise with them. One would not give much in questions of literary or æsthetic criticism for the verdict of a mind so enlightened as to be entirely above

"fads" and prejudices, nor in ethics for the judgments of a φρόνιμος so exalted as to be free for ever from all exaggeration and eccentricity of view. Such mere objectivity as this would seem to be ultimately irreconcilable with our position in the world as finite-infinite beings, each of whom reflects, or may reflect, in himself the structure of the world of experience as a whole, but reflects it, like one of Leibnitz's monads, from his own special and peculiar point of view.

Thus, for philosophy, we ought, it seems, to attribute to the propositions in which reflective thought attempts to construct a theory of the religious experiences a subjective rather than an objective validity. We should recognise that all theological propositions are a mere second-hand working-up of material which does not originally appear in the form of knowing or reflection, and that, as the religious experience itself necessarily varies from individual to individual, these second-hand products of reflection upon direct experience may have truth and value for the individual who offers them as the fruit of his own experience, without possessing the same or a similar value for others.

For the philosophic student there remains, of course, the important difference between the typical and essential in the religious experience, which recurs in not very dissimilar forms in the theory and practice of different ages and nations, and the accidental and accessory, which varies from one time and place, or even from one individual to another; but there no longer remains any further distinction between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy." The rare and "heterodox" *may* on examination reveal itself as the exceptionally forcible and happy expression of some aspect of the religious experience present in the immediate religious feeling of the orthodox, but omitted or but imperfectly represented in their theoretical statements about their experience. For it by no means follows that what finds no place or a subordinate and inadequate place in accepted theory finds no more prominent place in the experiences of which that theory professes to give an account.

Thus we shall not only recognise that the authority and validity of theoretical systems of theology is primarily subjective, but shall also be prepared to admit that theories

which have never attracted general notice, or even been rejected by recognised ecclesiastical authority as heretical, may on various points reflect the universal and essential features of the religious experience even more adequately than those which bear the stamp of official approval. The real enemy of "religion" is not, as is sometimes supposed, individuality or "heresy" in speculative opinion, but, on the one side, the dull indifferentism which acquiesces lazily in accepted versions of theological doctrine because it neither knows nor cares about the aspect of life which those doctrines claim to have reduced to system, and on the other an arrogant ecclesiastical or clerical self-assertiveness bent upon repressing all spontaneous and sincere expression of religious emotions and experiences which cannot be forced into the limits of its own traditional formulæ.

It is when, as is apparently the case at the present time in certain continental countries, these two forces play into one another's hands, and you get on the one side a lay population indifferent altogether to the religious experience, and at the same time lazily acquiescent in the accepted ecclesiastical institutions and ceremonies, and on the other a clerical caste determined at any cost to discourage every form of religious life except those provided for by its own creed and ritual, that the typically religious aspect of experience is in real danger of disappearing from the national life. When a religion has ceased even to awake opposition and controversy it is certain that it is on the verge of ceasing to reflect any living element in the experience of its nominal adherents, and is rapidly on the way to death from senile decay.

There have, no doubt, been periods when men were in earnest with the religious experience and yet apparently under the sole domination of a single ecclesiastical system, but at such periods of human history the individualism which theologians call "heresy" has been invisibly at work below the surface in producing type after type of more or less unorthodox mysticism, even when it has not taken visible shape in the form of schisms and reformations. It would indeed be strange if in physical science and even in mathematics, which deal with aspects of experienced reality which depend for their apprehension on simple organic conditions of a comparatively

invariable kind, there were room for unending controversy and divergence of opinion; but in religion and theology, which are concerned with experiences involving from the first highly complex ideal and emotional states, which vary most widely with the antecedents and constitution as well as with the life history of the individual, all genuine expressions of experience could be reduced to a single type by the simple expedient of dubbing the selected type "true" and all others "false" religions.

The nearest approach perhaps to a satisfactory philosophical theory of the experience which we have had in view in the present chapter is to be found in Spinoza's famous doctrine of the "intellectual love of God," which is, in his system, inseparably connected with knowledge of the highest kind. The *mentis summa acquiescentia*, of which Spinoza speaks as the necessary result of "knowledge of the third kind," is clearly identical with the consciousness of ourselves as already perfect in the perfect Universe or Absolute, in which we have found the characteristic mark of religion, as distinguished from every other form of emotion and experience. And the position given by Spinoza to this knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis* as the goal of man's progress from the state of slavery to that of freedom, once more coincides with the place we have assigned to the religious experience as replacing the non-existent and unreal, and therefore finally unsatisfactory ideals of morality by an ideal which is apprehended as already and perfectly real, and in union with which, according to the famous Pauline paradox, we become perfect by knowing ourselves to be already perfect. And finally, in the famous propositions which identify the "intellectual love of God" with God's own infinite love for Himself, we have a statement, at once singulary eloquent and singularly clear, of the all-important fact that the divine-human consciousness, as given in direct religious experiences, is a single experience containing distinguishable but inseparable aspects, and that the subsequent division of one side of that double consciousness from the other is a division arbitrarily and unwarrantably made by imperfect thinking itself.

To the popular mind, which assumes God and man to be two different realities each given in independence of the other, and

needing by some external and incidental process in time to be "atoned" or "reconciled" with each other, the Spinozistic identification of man's love of God with God's love for Himself has always been a paradox and a stumbling-block; but it is not too much to say that until it has been seen to be no paradox but simple and fundamental truth, the masterpieces of the world's religious literature must remain a sealed book to us.

The one defect of the Spinozistic *Religions-Philosophie* which prevents us from regarding it as a fully adequate theory of the experiences we are here discussing is its extreme intellectualism, and this intellectualism itself affords a striking illustration of that subjectivity of theological theory of which we have just been speaking. As a description of an individual's religious experiences the well-known propositions of Spinoza cannot be valued too highly. When we remember the curiously isolated position of the writer, between two religious and social systems, from one of which he was an outcast and in the other a stranger and semi-foreigner, we shall readily understand that no civic or political activity could have afforded Spinoza that consciousness of union with a perfect and absolutely worthy ideal into which all the ethical interests are absorbed, which he derived from the life of lonely and unremitting philosophic thought.[1] Being what he was and where he was, Spinoza could hardly have written otherwise without sinking into comparative superficiality and insincerity. Religious emotions arising from other than intellectual pursuits he could only have described, if he had described them at all, at second-hand, and as part of an experience from which he was by birth and early history, if not also by temperament, excluded.

But the very fact which gives Spinoza's theory its high value as a faithful and sincere description of an individual's experience at the same time detracts from its worth as an account of the universal and essential character of the religious experience of the civilised world. It is impossible, I think, not to feel that, in differently circumstanced and differently constituted natures, the discharge of social duty, which occupies

[1] It is hardly fanciful to find in *Aristotle's* position as a semi-stranger to Athenian life, a similar explanation of the fact that for him, as for Spinoza, but emphatically not for Plato, religious aspiration and emotion are restricted to the "theoretical" life.

a secondary and subordinate position with Spinoza as with Aristotle, directly awakens a form of emotion identical with that which Spinoza calls the "intellectual love of God," and connects exclusively with insight into the nature and causes of things. I at any rate can see no essential difference between the *mentis summa acquiescentia* of which Spinoza speaks and the emotion of glad and noble resignation to the laws of God expressed, for instance, in Herbert's well-known lines about sweeping the room for God and His laws, or in Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty." And both again seem identical with the spirit recommended by Paul of doing everything "to the Lord."

It is not only from knowledge of a speculative kind about our position in the scheme of things,[1] but from the recognition of any characteristic human aspiration as already provided for and made good in the perfect Absolute, that there arises "the highest possible acquiescence of mind." And on this side, at least, the Spinozistic conception of religion sins by being too narrow, and requiries rectification by the recognition of the ordinary moral and political activity of the good husband and father and citizen as affording, no less than the life of speculation, the opportunity for consciousness of our union with the perfect and infinite. In fact, current evangelical Christianity and Spinozism seem, at this point, mutually to supplement each other's defects. As evangelical Christianity has always insisted that salvation, or the experience of union with the Divine, is not specially nor primarily a matter of philosophic speculation, but one of direct experience, accessible to the humble and unlearned no less readily than to the wise and mighty, so it has frequently tended to forget that speculative and æsthetic activity, no less than philanthropic or self-disciplinary moral activity, have each its own typical form of absorption into a characteristically religious experience of unity with the Divine. Rightly insisting that "goodness" of itself will lead us to God, Christianity has often fallen into the error of supposing that nothing but goodness will do so.

Practical Christianity and Spinozism have each their own way to God, and each tends to ignore the existence of the other's

[1] This is what "knowledge of our own body under the form of eternity" seems to amount to.

road. The truth is that there is no one road to the Divine; as all ways lead to Rome, so all genuine human emotions and aspirations persistently followed out culminate in union with the Absolute. Neither goodness nor knowledge has any monopoly of the Deity, though each is only too prone to the spiritual pride which regards its own special way to perfection as the only one.[1] On this topic, however, we shall have to say something more presently.

The moral and religious attitudes towards life compared. —There may possibly seem to be some slight discrepancy between the opening pages of our present chapter and the position reached at the end of the last section. For we began by treating the religious experience as the final form assumed by the ethical experiences when the moral ideal comes to be identified with an actually existing perfect system, and now we seem to have ended by asserting that morality is only *one* of the types of experience which culminate in the religious consciousness of oneness with the Divine. The solution of this apparent contradiction must be sought in the ambiguity of the term "moral" or "ethical." Morality is sometimes understood as a comprehensive name for all the practical side of life, including every experience in which the presence of an ideal can be detected, and it is in the main in this sense that we have spoken of morality in the course of the present Essay. In this comprehensive sense of "morality," the endeavour towards complete scientific insight or perfect æsthetic expression is of course a subdivision of morals, and as such we have ourselves for the most part treated it.[2]

On the other hand, in common parlance a distinction would generally be drawn between "morality" and the typically scientific or artistic activity. Ordinary common sense would probably refuse to treat the desire for increased mathematical ability or finer literary expression as having anything moral

[1] Blake says admirably—

"To be good only is to be
As God—or else a Pharisee,"

(and one might say the same of mere knowledge). I suppose his meaning to be that mere goodness, if thorough enough, leads to union with God, but when coupled with the spiritual exclusiveness which denies the existence of any other approach to the Divine than its own ends in mere Pharisaism.

[2] Cf. Shadworth Hodgson, *Metaphysic of Experience*, vol. iii. p. 214, for a description of "ethics" as a "science which is supreme over the whole of human practice."

about it, though common sense would, in consequence of its refusal, find itself in difficulties when asked whether the impartiality, the openness of mind, the candour, and the diligence requisite for a scientific career, or the industry, self-discipline, and loyalty to æsthetic ideals expected of the artist are morally worthless qualities. Exactly where common sense would draw its line of distinction between moral and non-moral activity is more, probably, than common sense itself could tell us. Probably, however, we shall not be far wrong if we say that "morality" in the narrower sense is the current name for those forms of activity which, as being at once essential to the wellbeing of the community and not dependent for their existence upon a peculiar professional training, are expected of every member of society.[1] In practice these forms of behaviour will be found in the main to coincide with two principal classes of acts—acts directly tending to promote the wellbeing of some social whole to which the agent belongs, and acts which tend indirectly to the same result by counteracting the formation of habits leading to anti-social conduct. That it is immoral to harm, others or to form habits which may ultimately lead to their harm, the general conscience of mankind fully admits; probably the mass of men are not yet quite clear about the immorality of not trying to make the best of yourself.

It will be convenient in what follows to use the term "morality" as far as possible in the more extended and comprehensive of the two senses just distinguished, and to adopt the slightly different name "goodness" for the popular and more restricted meaning of "morality." This use of language is naturally suggested by the current application of the name "goodness" to the spirit which prompts acts of natural kindness and humanity—acts, that is, which need no special professional training in a circle of ideas and interests peculiar to some one restricted class of persons for their conception and execution, and of which the sufficient prerequisites are normal social feelings and such a degree of insight into the consequences of our conduct to others as is normally possessed by sane human beings. In what follows we shall attempt to

[1] So Protagoras is made by Plato to describe morality as the only art of which there are no professionals, just because society cannot afford to allow any of its members to be moral amateurs.

indicate the relation both of "morality" and of mere "goodness" to religion in such detail as seems demanded by the plan of this Essay. We can, however, see at once that the distinction between morality and goodness removes the apparent contradiction between two earlier sections of the present chapter. There may very well be other approaches to the religious experience than along the line of mere goodness, and yet every one of these lines of approach may belong to the moral side of life in that wider sense of the word in which all practice regulated by an ideal has been called morality.

The question raised at the head of the present section thus subdivides of itself into two. We have to examine (*a*) the relation of religion to morality, and (*b*) the relation of religion to that special department of the practical life which is popularly called "morality," *par excellence*, and named by us "goodness."

(*a*) *Religion and morality.*—On the relation between religion and morality, in the more extensive and more accurate sense of the word, there is little to be said except what has either been said or implied already, but it may be worth while to bring our conclusions on the subject briefly together. First, then, we may fairly say that religion and morality occupy common ground as both belonging essentially to the practical side of life. I mean that neither morality nor religion, even in their most attenuated forms, can be reduced to a *mere* apprehension or knowledge of any kind of the merely existent. The presence of an ideal or standard by which present existence is judged, and the regulation of conduct and the emotions connected with it by the ideal are indispensable both to morality and religion. You can, of course, make a duty and even a religion of the pursuit of mere knowledge for its own sake, quite independently of any remote bearing of the knowledge you acquire on the improvement of man's estate, but you cannot do so except by setting up some conception of perfect or fully systematised knowledge as a practical ideal by which to pass judgment upon the present contents of your thinking, and to direct your endeavours for the future.

If one were born with a complete ready-made knowledge of the whole contents of the world system, the con-

templation of that system would presumably arouse neither ethical nor religious emotion. And similarly, if one were born in a state of perfect harmony with one's physical and social environment in every respect, and remained in that state of harmony without ever needing to exert one's self to prevent its disruption or to restore it when disrupted, one would have no inkling of the experiences known to us as morality and religion. The contrast of the ideal with the actual, and the judgment of approbation or disapprobation in which the comparison of idea and reality finds its expression are the atmosphere and vital breath of both the moral and the religious life. And thus both belong properly to the practical side or aspect of human existence.

We must not, of course, fall into the vulgar mistake of supposing that this practical side or aspect of life can exist in real separation from the other or speculative aspect in point of time, as though, for instance, I were existing in a purely practical aspect when I pay a bill or take a railway journey, and in a purely speculative aspect when I am writing a page of this Essay. The distinction which can be properly drawn between the practical and the speculative is a distinction of a purely logical nature between two aspects of human consciousness which, though distinguishable, are presented in constant and inseparable union. There is, in fact, no single concrete state of mind in which the presence of both aspects may not be discerned. Every concrete state, that is, may be regarded in two ways—as the apprehension of a presently existing content, and as a step in the process by which some want is satisfied or some ideal reached or approximated to. As the apprehension of the presently existent every concrete state of mind belongs to the speculative, as a step in the advance towards an ideal goal, to the practical side of life. Thus the distinction which logic seems to require between these contrasted aspects cuts clear across the more popular distinction drawn by Aristotle between the life of the student and metaphysician and that of the politician and man of affairs. Every event of either life may be regarded in its double existence as at once a knowing and a doing—a speculative and a practical state.

By saying, then, that religion, like morality, is pre-

eminently practical, we mean, not that it cannot be regarded as an apprehension, or even, in a wider sense of the word, as a knowing, but that mere apprehension or knowing, even though it had for its content the perfect Absolute or world-system itself, would not be religion apart from its relation to a previously formed ideal of completed or perfected knowledge of which it were felt to be the adequate realisation. The characteristic difference between religion and morality, viewed as conflicting attempts to give adequate expression to the practical element in human life, lies in the nature of their relation to that ideal of perfection and complete satisfaction of craving which is at the root of both. What that difference is has been explained more than once already in our account of the religious experience. For morality, as we have seen, the ideal is always something not as yet reached, and every apparent instance of its realisation in an actual experience an illusion which close inspection or more adequate analysis will dispel. For religion, on the other hand, the actualised ideal is not only real, but is the supreme, and, in the full sense of the word, the only reality, and it is the apparent reality of that which conflicts with the ideal that is the illusion. Or, to repeat once more the excellent expression of Mr. Bosanquet, for religion the "goodwill" is already real.

The nature of this paradox of religion has been already explained in sufficient detail for our purposes, but it will be worth our while here to take note of some of the consequences which would follow from carrying out the religious attitude towards the ideal in our practical verdicts on character and acts. A short examination of the modifications introduced by the adoption of the religious standpoint into the characteristic concepts of ethics will not only prepare the way for our discussion of the relation of religion to mere goodness, but will also do much to help us to a definite answer to the question which our concluding pages will have finally to discuss as to the scope and possibility of a "Metaphysic of Ethics."

Now it will at once be patent that the first result of the transition from the purely ethical to the religious way of envisaging the relation of the ideal to the actual must be to reduce a number of concepts or categories which are of universal and absolute application within the limits of ethics

proper to a subordinate and secondary position, as containing a merely relative and partial truth. For ethics, in its most fully developed form, as we have said in our third chapter, the concepts of obligation and of merits were characteristic and essential. The last word of mere ethics is said when we have reached the concept of the world of human beings as a society composed of members each of whom has definite and ascertainable duties, according to his position in the community, and each of whom could, if only we possessed sufficient knowledge of his mental history and his surroundings, be assigned, in respect both of his character as a whole and of particular acts, to a definite place in the scale of merit and demerit.

Or, in simpler words, the characteristic feature of the purely ethical view of the world is its conviction that it is possible satisfactorily and finally to classify men and their acts as good and bad. It may, of course, be admitted from the purely ethical point of view that it would be practically impossible to obtain sufficient information as to the facts of a man's life to pass judgment upon him and his acts with full confidence; still, from the point of view of mere ethics, the impossibility of passing such a judgment lies solely in the difficulty about getting information, and not in any inherent contradictoriness of the judgment itself; hence a God who is supposed *ex hypothesi* to be completely informed as to the facts is also held by theistic moralists, from the strictly ethical point of view, to pass judgment upon and classify men as "good" and "bad" with final and unerring accuracy. And it is sometimes said that a man and his career should, as a point of charity, be "left to the judgment of God," with the implication that that judgment is passed upon ethical grounds after a complete survey of facts which are inaccessible in their entirety to human perception, and that the facts thus known in their entirety form an adequate ground for such a final and unerring moral estimate.

Now mark how the transition from the moral to the religious attitude towards the world revolutionises our way of looking at all this. From the moral point of view we divided men, with more or less confidence, into two great classes—those in whose conduct the "good will" is made real, and those in whose conduct it is neglected or thwarted. But from the

standpoint of religion this distinction can no longer be regarded as final and satisfactory. For there is for religion no such thing as real opposition to the "good will" which it experiences as the sole and ultimate reality. Such opposition as there appears to the irreligious man to exist is for religion an illusion which ceases to have any reality the moment you ascertain its true character. The apparently "bad" and "evil" thus appears to the eye of religion as only apparently in opposition to the "good" or "divine" will, which is fulfilled as much in human failure and "badness" as in human success and "goodness."

And the source of the illusion is not difficult to indicate. That appears "evil" to me which is in conflict either with what I judge to be good and desirable for me, or with what I mistakenly suppose to be the "divine" will. And in either case it rests with me myself to dispel the illusion either by learning to make the "divine" will my will, and to cease treating my finite self as the central object of the universe, or by amending my false and ultimately immoral notions as to what the divine will is. If once I could perfectly succeed, in either way, in making my will completely one with the "divine" will—that is, in making the perfect Absolute as it really is the sole object of approbation and endeavour,—I should in the same moment escape from the otherwise inevitable illusion of seeing failure, evil, and defeat in the universe.

Hence for religion the classification of acts and men as "good" and "bad" must appear unsatisfactory and superficial. For, on the one hand, ultimately all acts and all characters are good as fulfilling, each in its own place, the perfect world system, and on the other every act and every character is bad as failing to realise the perfect world-system in more than an infinitesimal fragment of its concrete fulness. Religion thus knows nothing of merit and demerit. Instead of the customary classification of men as on the one hand respectable and good, and on the other as disreputable and bad, it substitutes a double estimate according to which, on the one hand, the outcast and the sinner are already, as members of the perfect world order, really perfect if they only had the faith to perceive it, and on the other all men alike—the man of rigid virtue and strict

habits no less than the reprobate—are equally condemned and equally guilty before God.

Thus where morality speaks of varying degrees of merit religion knows nothing except of free and unmerited grace. Where morality says, "I have kept the law from my youth up," religion can only exclaim on the one hand, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and on the other, "My faith hath made me whole." Where morality establishes hard and fast distinctions of repute, of worth, and of dignity between man and man, religion brings all together in a common humiliation and a common exaltation. The one puffs up, the other keeps lowly, the one dries up and narrows, the other expands and sets free to the utmost extent the general and universal sympathy of man with man, irrespective of character and antecedents.

Now the difference between the religious and the merely ethical view of character is not one of merely speculative interest; it has also important consequences of a practical kind, as it affects our habitual attitude towards our fellow-men. And it is, moreover, important to observe that the considerations on which this difference of practical attitude is based are such as would in any case be forced upon us by the observed facts of life, even if they had not been embodied in some of the most prominent of the doctrines of the religion which has become traditional among us. I suppose it is hardly possible that any one should ever acquire any deep insight into life or any wide experience of his fellow-men without coming to feel that there is something singularly unsatisfactory about the complacent ethical judgment which classifies men and their actions as "good" and "bad." These classifications, we cannot but feel, never get very far below the surface of things. It is only for superficial purposes that we can rest contented with the description of an act or a man as "good" or "bad," or even with the specification of the degree of merit or demerit they possess. Reflection upon our actual experience of life, no less than regard for religious conceptions of the dependence of man upon God, will surely convince us, if we are only thorough with it, that there is something radically wrong about our ordinary ethical judgments, in which we impute merit or blame to an agent as the consequence of his own acts.

For practical purposes it is, of course, convenient to draw a distinction between acts which a man can "help," and in virtue of which he is said to have good or ill deserts, and those which he cannot "help," and in respect of which he may be regarded as a subject not for praise or censure, but only for envy or pity. But distinctions which are admirably suited for limited practical purposes may easily become meaningless and even mischievous when they are treated as valid for thought as well as for action, and applicable outside the limits imposed by immediate practice. And from the illegitimate theoretical application of such merely relative distinctions it is no long step to the practical abuse of them. And both these abuses of relative distinctions, the practical as well as the theoretical, may frequently be traced in the judgments and actions prompted by current ethical preconceptions about freedom and responsibility.

This can be illustrated in numerous ways, of which I choose for my own purposes one of the simpler. Take any act, or still better, the character, regarded as a whole, of any man you please. Popular ethical common sense will at once assert that part of the preconditions of the act, or part of the circumstances which have gone to form the character of the individual in question, was within the individual's own control, and part independent of it. In respect of the former you would commonly be held to merit praise or blame, as the case might be; in respect of the others only to be a fitting subject for congratulation or commiseration.

But sincere and thorough analysis will always show that if any part of an individual's character is regarded as ultimately "beyond his own control," every part must be so regarded. You cannot once begin to recognise the dependence of character for its formation upon circumstances which are not of the individual's own choosing or making without being logically led on to recognise that, directly or indirectly, *all* the circumstances which go to the formation of character are independent of the individual's agency. For the circumstances in question may be exhaustively classified as (*a*) elements of preformed disposition or character, including, of course, habits acquired during the lifetime of the individual as well as psycho-physical preformations inherited

from ancestors or depending upon connate germinal variation, and (*b*) elements in the physical and social environment.

Now, as to (*b*), popular common sense would admit that, with the exception of the case in which our present environment has been brought about as the consequence of planning on our own part, this element in the situation is independent of our own agency, and therefore not a proper ground for the bestowal of praise or blame. In the case of (*a*), however, popular common sense would assert that we can fairly be praised or blamed and classed as good or bad in virtue of original disposition, and also of acquired habits, when these last have taken their rise from conscious choice and foresight of our own. Yet a profounder analysis will surely show that the distinction thus established between acts and elements of character which are, and others which are not, of our own making is, like the rest of our current ethical thought, little more than a convenient practical makeshift. For it seems, in the first place, illogical to attempt to treat the various conditions of an act of choice as though they could, like the ingredients in a chemical combination, be separated out from one another and isolated in test-tubes. When once you have admitted that my conduct on any given occasion was, to any extent whatever, determined by circumstances which created the alternatives between which I had on that occasion to choose, it seems futile and unmeaning to raise the question "how much" of my actual behaviour was, and how much was not, a matter of "free" choice. It is, in fact, not unlike asking how much of the explosion is "due" to the spark and how much to the powder.

And besides, though it is eminently false to hold with some of the more popular and thoughtless forms of determinism that human character is the mere creature of environment, it is only the truth to assert, with Plato, that we have no more created for ourselves the other determining factor in the formation of character, the original datum of psycho-physical constitution, than we have created our own environment. So long as we agree to forget that psycho-physical constitution is a matter of preformation and not of our individual choice, there is a real basis for the distinction between an element in our character or destiny which we have, and another element

which we have not, made for ourselves. And in various departments of life, where we are concerned not with the attainment of finally coherent speculative notions about the universe, but with immediate practice, it is most important to act upon the distinction. For the purposes of law, for instance, it is most important to have a clear view as to what sort of conduct can or cannot be prevented by the affixing to it of penalties, or again as to what kinds of conduct, though undesirable in themselves, cannot be suppressed by penalties without creating conduct more undesirable still. For such reasons as these it should be clear that for the practical purposes of law and everyday moral action it is important to have a working theory of responsibility, but also that such a theory need possess no ultimate speculative validity, and that its existence must not be used as an argument in the theoretical controversy between the partisans of free-will and those of determinism.

But to look at the conditions upon which human conduct and human happiness depends in the spirit of unbiassed scientific analysis, is to see at once that no finally satisfactory boundary line can be drawn between that for which we are and that for which we are not responsible. If we did not make our original environment, neither, if you come to that, did we make our original psycho-physical endowment. It was wrong for instance, says one, to indulge in excesses which have damaged your constitution. You could not, indeed, altogether "help" the fact that your environment was such as to offer temptations to those indulgences, but you might have helped yielding to temptation. And yet, if you will but reflect, you could not "help" coming into the world with the neuropathic or the otherwise abnormal constitution which made certain stimuli into irresistible temptations.[1]

And further, from the religious point of view, the man who yields as well as the man who resists, the bad as well as the

[1] I do not see that the point of the argument would be evaded by taking refuge in the indeterminism which seems to be once more coming into favour. Even supposing indeterminism to be the truth, it is hard to conceive how it helps us to solve any of our difficulties about responsibility. If there is a something "in me" which behaves with spontaneity, in the sense which indeterminists appear to put on the word—that is, independently of my constitution, habits, and history, then the one thing I can say of such an agent is that it is not what I mean by "myself," and that I should take it ill if I were held accountable for the caprices of so unaccountable a

good, must be regarded as being, if one could only see it, perfect and "good" in his place, as a function of the perfect Universe. It is true his place is not one we would choose, if we could help it; for our own sakes we would much rather fulfil some other function than that of the "vessel of dishonour." Yet, when we remember that the perfect world-system includes the "vessel of dishonour" and his dishonour, no less than the vessel of praise, as an integral element in its own perfection, we shall surely feel that the appropriate emotion on our part, when we contrast our own lot with that of the human failure, is not Pharisaic self-approbation, nor yet lofty ethical censure, but humble thankfulness towards the Power that has assigned our more pleasant task, and a pity that refuses to usurp the function of judge towards the less fortunate. Not the spirit which, assured of its own moral strength and purity, is for meting out to the offender stern and pitiless punishment, but the consciousness of unworthiness and dependence for all that is best in ourselves upon a Power greater than ourselves, which prompts to the prayer "Lead us not into temptation," is the spirit in which an enlightened piety and an intelligent philosophy contemplate the spectacle of human error and human crime.

And this difference between the merely ethical attitude which regards differences of merit and demerit as final, and the religious recognition of the equal abasement and the equal perfection of all, is not a mere curiosity of philosophical speculation: it has a direct and most important bearing upon our practical behaviour in the face of the weakness and wickedness of our fellow-men. The purely moralistic attitude expressed by the determination to give every man his "due" and nothing more is, of course, invaluable in our courts of justice as a means of securing life and property, and in examinations and competitions of all kinds as a protection against the evils of nepotism and favouritism. But when you carry it out into all your daily relations with your fellows it promptly degenerates into pure Pharisaism and hardness of

being. And if "spontaneity" does not exclude the admission that each of us begins in life with ineradicable elements of disposition which he did not make for himself and cannot change at pleasure, you come back to the difficulty raised in the text. As far as I can see, the question between determinism and indeterminism is only one of the relative convenience, for the special purposes of ethics, of two hypothesis, both of which are ultimately self-contradictory.

heart. For individual practice, the higher because the truer view is one which treats differences of merit as the subordinate and secondary circumstances which they are, and which, recognising the value to the absolute universe of all types of existence, is, as far as may be, sympathetic and long-suffering with all.

Religion expresses this sense of the impropriety of treating our own private standards of worth as the final measure of things in the commands to be like our Father in Heaven, whose kindness is bestowed alike on the just and on the unjust, to forgive our enemies [1] and to be forbearing towards our persecutors. More explicitly, it insists upon the ultimate worthlessness and arbitrariness of our ethical standards of worth, from the standpoint of the Absolute, in the classical parable of the publican and the Pharisee.[2] It is perhaps in this apologue more than anywhere else in the Gospels, except in the parallel story of the woman taken in adultery, that Jesus appears as essentially a "breaker of the old tables." With St. Paul the same conviction of the artificiality and ultimate irrationality of our current hard and fast distinctions has grown into the striking myth of the "Bondwoman which is Mount Sinai," and forms, as we have already seen, the speculative basis of his great characteristic doctrine of "Justification by faith." It is precisely because our hard and fast moral distinctions are so far from expressing differences which go beneath the surface, and are rooted in the heart of things, that the act of "faith" is capable of working the revolution which mere morality fails to accomplish, and of making the

[1] So Blake—

"Mutual forgiveness of each vice
These are the gates of Paradise," etc.—

and more mystically—

"And through all eternity
I forgive you, you forgive me;
As our dear Redeemer said,
This the wine and this the bread."

At the same time he wittily illustrates the impossibility of taking the higher view in all cases by the quatrain:—

"In heaven the only art of living
Is forgetting and forgiving,
But if you on earth forgive
You shall not know where to live."

[2] How many readers of the Gospel, I wonder, have seen the full implication of these stories, viz., that adultery and extortion are less heinous faults than self-righteousness and censoriousness.

"child of wrath" into one of the "children of God and co-heirs with Christ."

And thus vital religion is seen to be from the very nature of the case always and necessarily antinomian, in the fullest and truest sense of the word. Where the "law,"—that is, a hard and fast systematic classification of men according to their imagined "desert,"—is supreme and unquestioned, there religion, except in the sense of superstitious beliefs about the "other world," and equally superstitious ceremonial founded on those beliefs, does not exist. For this reason, there is no class of people so thoroughly irreligious, because none so wanting in the humility of heart and broad human sympathy which are characteristic of the religious attitude, as the supremely respectable. This "antinomian" attitude, moreover, is that not only of all deep religious feeling, but of all really sane philosophy. Philosophic reflection upon the conditions of human life, no less than the religious sense of dependence upon God, inevitably destroys the notion that our convenient judicial classification of men according to their "merits" corresponds to their real position as functions of the world-system. Experience and philosophy, no less than religion, teach the truth of the maxim, *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*, and dispose the mind to humility and broad human sympathy.

Of course, it is often practically convenient not to be a philosopher, and I doubt whether human society could subsist if we all really had complete philosophic insight into the antecedents and consequents of every criminal act. In practice it is just as well that our insight into these matters should in many cases stop short before it reaches the point at which indignation at the criminal's wickedness would give way to pity for his unhappy position.[1] The same, however, might be said about the disadvantages of omniscience in any department of knowledge. Thus, while all philosophers maintain that death, to the eye of true wisdom, is no evil, most of them, I should conceive, would allow that, for the purposes of human

[1] "How utterly we disregard the botanical character of wild flowers when we are clearing them out of the garden as weeds" (Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 166). Similarly justice, in order to get its garden decently cleared, has to shut its eyes to the "botanical character" of human weeds, and may be called blind in a deeper than the traditional sense.

society, it is well that the majority of men should be unphilosophic enough to regard death as a very great evil. The necessity, for certain purposes, of *not* looking ahead of you and of acquiescing without misgiving in the rigid distinctions of current morality does not prove those distinctions ultimately sound and valid; it merely shows that, in moral as in other matters, it is sometimes well not to see too far—a point which is amusingly illustrated by Stevenson's already quoted fable about the sinking ship. That necessity does not in the least interfere with our duty, on occasions when there is no call to act as judges over our fellows, to cultivate the supra-moral attitude of universal sympathy and spontaneous forgiveness.

(*b*) *Religion and goodness.*—On the relation between religion and goodness, in the narrower sense of the word, it will not be necessary to say very much beyond what has been already implied in our treatment of the wider question of the relation of religion to morality. There are, however, two points at least which it is desirable not to pass over in complete silence.

And first, it is necessary to remind ourselves that religion is not exclusively dependent for its basis upon "goodness" or specifically "moral" emotion. There can be emotions, and there can be an attitude towards life which must be admitted to be fundamentally one in spirit with what we have called religion where there is comparatively little of what is ordinarily understood by morality. There can even be, in some abnormally constituted minds, something like a religion of badness, as we shall presently see. Thus far at least I feel compelled to dissent from a statement which occurs somewhere towards the end of Mr. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, to the effect that a man may be a great artist or a great philosopher and yet be a bad or immoral man, but no one can be a "religious" and at the same time an immoral man.[1] That this statement represents the mature views of the author I can scarcely believe after reading the admirable discussion of religion in *Appearance and Reality*, but it so accurately hits off what is undoubtedly the popular view with philosophers as well as

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 280. Of course, a great deal depends upon what is meant by "on the whole immoral." If it means "without serious purpose in life" I should agree with the statement; but I cannot see that a man might not break all the ten commandments, for instance, and yet be a "religious man."

with the unphilosophical, that I cite it here as the pithiest expression known to me of a theory as to the relation of morals to religion which I at least am bound to pronounce radically false.

It is true that, for most ordinary members of society, the earnest practice of morality and the consequent intellectual absorption in the ethical problem of "fulfilling the law" is the principal avenue which conducts to that direct experience of the Divine which we have called religion. For most of us, not to be in earnest about sin and goodness and duty would mean to live without religious emotion, and without the consciousness of our secret identity with that something more than man which religion, in its current form, reveres as the "God made man." But I must insist that, at least for those who are richly dowered with intellectual or artistic gifts, there are other modes of realising this experience than that provided by the conscientious discharge of moral duty. It is characteristic of that spiritual pride which is the besetting sin of the mere moralist that, not content with knowing that heaven may be reached along his special lines, he goes on to assert that it can be reached on no other. Against this exclusiveness, begotten of pride and intellectual narrowness, it is important for us to insist that pure speculative thought and pure artistic creative activity may both of them lead to a religious experience largely independent of what is ordinarily understood by "morality."

For the religious experience is, as we have already seen, primarily simply a development from the workmanlike or the scholarly love of thoroughness and whole-hearted absorption in your pursuit, whatever that pursuit may be. Pursue anything with sufficient intensity of emotion and sincerity of aim, and you will find yourself no less surely coming to regard it as the supreme reality in the universe than the moralist who attributes that position to "goodness." If for the moralist the world is primarily a place "to be righteous in," for the philosopher it is, first and foremost, a place to think truly in, and for the poet a place in which to create his "bright shoots of everlastingness." And, as far as one can construe to one's self the experiences of a philosophic or artistic genius without being one's self a genius, I should imagine that the same sense

of alienation from the central reality of the universe which comes to the moralist as the "sense of sin," came to the philosopher and the poet as the sense of baffled intellectual activity, or failure to make the articulate word the adequate expression of the vaguely conceived imaginative vision. And again, I cannot doubt the substantial identity of the emotion of the philosopher or the poet, in their moments of attainment, with that consciousness of union with the central reality which a religion based upon ethical experiences known as "peace with God" or "a sense of sins forgiven."

Nor is the existence of types of religious experience into which merely ethical ingredients scarcely enter mere matter of theory. It is impossible to read Aristotle's or Spinoza's description of the life of speculation without feeling ourselves in the presence of an intensely religious experience connected with intellectual activity in precisely the same way in which the religious experiences of ordinary men are connected with moral struggles.[1] Both authors are clearly speaking not from mere theory but from personal experience of a kind of consciousness of one's self as one with the Divine which is, in the main, conditioned by quite other than ethical experiences. And hence there is no difficulty in seeing that a thinker might, in connection with his intellectual life, be conscious of the experiences described by them and yet, in his ordinary social relations, show himself liable to the assaults of the flesh and the world to a degree which would, for most of us more ordinary mortals, render the religious consciousness of oneness with the Divine quite impossible.

We cannot, then, too strongly insist that religion is not necessarily, though it is most frequently, dependent upon "goodness" in the restricted sense of the word. Thought and artistic intuition each have their own characteristic form of religion as well as "morality," and a thinker or an artist may well be in his own way a man of deep and sincere religious life without being what would commonly be called exemplary in his social relations, and even without being greatly disturbed by his "moral" lapses. It is only when purity of heart is

[1] Cf. the story of Hegel's retort to his landlady's exhortations to attend divine service, "Meine liebe Frau, das Denken ist auch Gottesdienst." Add the same of "das Schaffen," and you have the position defended in our text.

understood to mean singleness and sincerity of aim and wholeness of devotion that it can be said to be an indispensable prerequisite for the vision of the Divine. The blessing spoken of in the Gospel, it must be owned, may be enjoyed by many to whom the current ethical codes of society would refuse the name of "pure in heart." And if the rule of religious living may fairly be said to be "Seek first the kingdom of God," it must in honesty be added that "righteousness" is far from being the only characteristic of that kingdom.

I am not sure that we may not go even further than we have done in the preceding sentences. Not only may we have religion and the religious experience arising from a basis independent, in the main, of "goodness," but, unless I read certain facts amiss, we may even have definitely and unmistakably religious experiences connecting themselves with a content which is recognised by the worshippers as positively bad from the moral point of view. I cannot at any rate undertake to deny the possibility of "Satanism"—that is, of an experience of supreme mental satisfaction in the identification of one's will and heart with a power recognised as "evil,"—I mean, as making for the ultimate dissolution of the organic structure of society. If there is such a thing as the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," there may be also, so far at least as I can see, a peace of the devil which passeth all understanding.

The religious emotions of the ordinary man, based as they are upon experiences of the ethical type, may be roughly described as arising from the consciousness that his life, whether, as judged by ordinary standards, it be conceived as a success or a failure, is throughout in ultimate harmony with the Power that upholds and is responsible for the organic structure of the universe. Is it inconceivable that, in minds of a perverted and abnormal type, the same emotions may be called forth by the conviction of unity of purpose with a Power aiming at the dissolution of all organic structure, including that of human society? If most of us find ourselves at once humbled and exalted by the thought of our own hidden identity with a Power that creates, may not one and another here and there derive the same exaltation and humiliation from a belief in themselves as instruments of a rebel

Power that destroys? At least some of the utterances of the Anarchists of politics and of art seem unintelligible except upon some such assumption.[1] A century which has produced Baudelaire and Nietzsche ought hardly to refuse to believe in Satanism of a much more serious type than the unintelligent mummeries to which the name is currently applied.

I do not, of course, mean that the religion of badness is at all a widely diffused type of experience, or that a content definitely recognised as evil lends itself as easily to the genesis of religious emotion as one recognised as morally good. On the contrary, I should conceive that "Satanism" must be regarded as an abnormal development or "freak" of human nature, only to be met with in cases where you have the conjunction of a permanent pathological state of the central nervous system with exceptional social environment. But it is not without an important bearing upon the general problem of the relation of religion to morality that we can even conceive the existence of such a state of mind.

I pass on to another point of more general interest and less pathological character. Not only may you, under certain circumstances, get specifically religious experiences without moral goodness, but it is a notorious fact of experience that the religious life, even when primarily based upon an ethical foundation, has its own special moral dangers, and that you cannot give yourself up unreservedly to the indulgence of religious emotion without at least running a very serious risk of lowering your moral tone. I do not mean simply that the existence of the religious type of life and the esteem in which some forms of it are held among us afford a standing temptation to the practice of deliberate religious hypocrisy for ulterior purposes. For, if that were all, we might deplore the fact, but could hardly lay the blame upon religion. I mean rather that it is almost impossible, from the very nature of the religious experience, for a man who surrenders himself wholly to religious emotions and religious motives not to become that worst of hypocrites, a self-deceiver.

For it is with religious as it is with other forms of

[1] Goethe's Mephistopheles unconsciously formulated by anticipation the principle of Anarchism in his dictum that, "alles was entsteht Ist wert, dass es zu Grunde geht." Would not heart-whole loyalty to this principle of Nihilism be a religion in its way?

violent emotion, to have tasted deeply of it once is to feel a lasting craving for the renewal of the delicious intoxicant. And as the unlimited renewal of violent emotion is precluded by the structure of the nervous organism, so the perpetual consciousness of one's identity with the Divine is rendered impossible by the fact that that identity is after all only partial, and that we are as truly ephemera as we are Gods. And yet, once more, the appetite in matters religious as well as in matters of a more carnal kind grows with what it feeds on, and hence the constant tendency of persons strongly under the influence of either kind of passion to attempt by mental stimulants of all kinds, vows, protestations, self-accusations and the like, to provoke the outburst of emotions which refuse to appear spontaneously. And, as often happens in such cases, it will frequently be just where the expression of emotion is most frantic that the lover or the devotee, if he has some sincerity left him, will start to find himself asking whether his feelings are or are not largely feigned. And in the end it will be just the persons who know in their hearts that religious emotion left to itself would gradually disappear from their lives, and who fear the foreseen satiety, who will be most unsparing in their efforts to kindle the dead ashes into some ghostly semblance of the old flame. With most of us religion can fortunately only be one among many competing interests in life, and we have therefore no need to apprehend for ourselves the possibility of such a final descent into the abyss of self-sophistication; but we must all, as I take it, unless religious aspiration has left us entirely untouched, have had cause at times to learn from our own experience how prolific religious feeling is in self-deceptions of a minor kind. We may therefore well maintain not only that it is a moral duty to be non-moral, but that it is one of our first religious duties—if we would save ourselves from self-deceit—not to be merely nor too entirely religious.

One final word on the relations between religion and morality proper yet remains to be said. If the essence of the religious experience is to know yourself as perfect in the perfection of the Absolute, and if on the testimony of the religious experience itself, the bad man is, in this sense, and when viewed in his relation to the rest of the universe, no

less perfect than the good man, why should we go through the weary business of moral self-discipline at all? Why not enjoy the knowledge of our perfection without the preliminary unpleasantness of weaning ourselves from our cherished imperfections? The answer is, that it is the standing intellectual paradox of the religious life that though the wicked man may to the eyes of religion be also already perfect, he does not and, except in those pathological cases already referred to, cannot know himself to be so. Whether the religious experience is won along the lines of ethical or of æsthetic or speculative activity, it is, except in these few isolated cases, only to be had permanently in conjunction with a kind of life involving long and laborious self-discipline in the pursuit of an exalted ideal. So Spinoza might have said, from the standpoint of the religion of pure intellect, that though every mind is consciously or unconsciously a part of the *infinitus intellectus Dei*, it is only the few minds that have undergone the discipline of philosophy that are fully aware of their own high origin and dignity.

From the point of view of the religious spirit generally, the ethical habit of mind is, after all, to be cherished and fostered, for it is only through the ethical habit and temper that men who are neither geniuses nor pathological neurotics make their way to the mental peace and harmony of the religious life. In this sense, at least, the old saying that though few can be great all can be good, with its unspoken implication that the path of the few great and the path of the many good lead to the same end, may be accepted as just. And we are thus, for purposes of practice at least, saved from the danger into which ill-regulated and thoughtless abandonment to the immediate experiences of religion might lead—the danger of choosing to "sin that grace may abound." The Antinomianism of a sane religion is of the judgment and not of the will; its tolerance of the sinner betokens no secret hankering after the sin.[1]

Religion and philosophy.—As we have indicated in the

[1] Though there is, unless the whole reasoning of our previous chapter is fallacious, an Antinomianism of the will which is essential to all vital morality, not to say religion. I mean the practical Antinomianism which refuses to flinch from taking the good within its grasp from respect for mere general rules and established conventions, which one knows not to be applicable to one's own case.

last section of this chapter, the points of difference between the religious and the ethical, so we must now, in completion of our task, indicate briefly the points of difference between the philosophical and the religious views of the world and life. For it cannot be too vehemently urged that the intellectual outlook of religion itself is limited and obscured by "symbolic" concepts which forbid us to regard it as a finally adequate expression of truth in the form of "pure" experience. Hence the metaphysician, at least, has laid upon him the duty of regarding the world from a point of view which is not only supra-ethical but also supra-religious.

This may be brought to sight by various lines of argument, of which I choose one of the most concise and simple. As the ethical view of life has been seen to rest throughout upon intellectual compromise, so also does the religious. This arises from the very nature of the case, for the religious attitude towards the world is essentially practical, and all practice is based upon more or less subtly-disguised compromise. In the case of practical religion the basis of compromise "stares you in the face" the moment you look at things squarely and fairly. For the case stands thus: the intellectual prerequisite of the religious experience is a conviction of the unreality of failure and evil, and everything else that bears upon it the stamp of imperfection. But unless you sufficiently believe in the reality of evil to spend yourself in the practical struggle against it you will not permanently get the religious experience. You have, as it were, to be conscious and unconscious of the same fact—the presence of evil in yourself and your *milieu*—at one and the same time if you wish to be thoroughly religious.

And hence religion is, in our actual life, constantly hovering between two extremes, either of which would be fatal to it in its peculiar character as a mode of practical reaction upon our environment. Too keen a sense of the reality of evil as an element in human life and in existence generally would mean oblivion of the purely phenomenal character of that reality, and a consequent redescent to the merely ethical level of thought and action; too profound a conviction of the ultimate unreality of anything but the perfect Absolute would in practice lead to an immoral and

unmanly quietism. You can only avoid one or other of these extremes by contriving to expend your practical energy in the whole-hearted warfare against an enemy whom, in secret, you know all the time to be a figment of your own brain.

Hence all religion, judged by the standard of the metaphysician's pure experience, inevitably contains and rests upon an element of "make-believe." If it were really thoroughly in earnest with its own intellectual assumptions it would cease to be practical, and become purely speculative and contemplative of the already existing perfect world-order. It would in fact become mere metaphysics, and in doing so would by way of compensation lose its practical value as a guide to conduct. It is thus not surprising to find that, as a matter of fact, religion when, as mysticism, it becomes contemplative, has always shown a tendency to pass into mere dreamy quietism. For the mystic salvation inevitably tends to be thought of not as something yet to be achieved and depending for achievement on his own co-operation, but as an *opus operatum* brought about once and for all by Divine agency "before the beginning of the world." And from the intellectual acquiescence in this notion of an *opus operatum* to practical abandonment on the part of the "elect" to unbounded licence is no very lengthy stride.[1] But of course when once the step from theological mysticism to practical licence has been taken, practical licence long enough indulged in is certain to destroy the religious enthusiasm which was its own progenitor. Thus once more religion is seen to rest upon a basis of compromise between elements which do not admit of real intellectual reconciliation. The quietist theory which leads to practical lawlessness cannot be denied, as a theory, without striking at the whole intellectual framework of religion

[1] I need do no more than refer to the faultless insight with which Browning has reproduced the state of mind fostered by mysticism of the type spoken of above in his *Johannes Agricola in Meditation*. It is interesting to see how the practical intellect of Wesley revolted against the note of mysticism in his versions of German pietistic poetry.

"O Abgrund welcher *alle* Sünden
Durch Christi Tod verschlungen *hat*,"

becomes in his translation—

"My sins are swallowed up in thee,"

the implication of an *opus operatum* thus entirely vanishing.

itself, and cannot be permanently carried out in practice without reacting in a deleterious way upon religious emotion.

Now, How is this internal contradiction to be met? Practical common sense, after its usual fashion, would attempt to meet it by the reflection that you can have too much of a good thing, and that religious enthusiasm even must never be carried to an extreme or allowed uncontrolled mastery of life. Such a method of cutting the Gordian knot we see realised to perfection in the attitude of mediation which that eminently common sense institution, the Church of England, has traditionally maintained between religious indifference and religious fanaticism. But however excellent this attitude of common sense may be in its practical effects, it is difficult not to feel on the one hand that the "fanatics" and not the persons of lukewarm and "rational" piety are the men with whom the religious experience is a reality, and on the other that the religious "indifferentists," the men of "mere morality," draw the more logical conclusion from the premisses adopted in common by themselves and the partisans of "rational" piety as against the fanatics. A "religion of good sense," we feel, must always rest under the imputation of lukewarmness and superficiality cast by a Scriptural writer upon Laodicea.

The metaphysician's method of dealing with the puzzle is far other; here, as everywhere where he has to do with principles which refuse to be carried out in practice except with suicidal results, he knows he is in the presence of a view of the world which is vitiated by "symbolic" and therefore untrue elements, and he is at once prompted to search in the speculative utterances of the adherents of that view for the source of the contradiction. In the case of religious mysticism he has not far to look before he discovers what he is seeking. In the mysticism which seems to be the final and highest expression of which the religious theory of the world—as religious—is capable, there is, to the eye of the metaphysical critic, an incessant alternation between two ultimately contradictory points of view. On the one hand, it has got beyond the superficial ethical classification of men and their deeds into good and bad, righteous and wicked, and can look on the just and unjust as alike filling their proper place in a supra-moral order which is neither good nor bad, but simply self-

coherent and self-maintaining. On the other hand it cannot, unless it is to degenerate into practical indolence and licence, drop the conviction that the world-order itself is a sort of gigantic struggle between the good which has to be made triumphant and the evil which, at present, seems to have the upper hand in many quarters of the universe. The practical mystic seems never quite able to escape from the alternatives of sensualism or Manicheism.[1]

Or one may express the same thought in the imaginative language to which religious mysticism is partial, by saying that the mystic never quite gets clear on the fundamental identity of the realities which appear to him as God and the Devil respectively. What I mean is this: he finds in the world-order the character of completeness and self-coherency which is what he is always requiring of his own moral ideals. Further he finds that, to a large extent at any rate, the complete world-order provides for the realisation of his ideals. So he finds that order eminently admirable and deserving of worship, and bestows on it the name of God. Yet there is another aspect of the same world-order, to which no serious man can be blind, in which it manifests itself as superbly indifferent to our ideals and our moral judgments, in which it appears as an overpowering force thwarting and making havoc of the plans of life and theories of what ought to be which are set up by finite members of the world-system for themselves. And this side of the world-order appears to the average man of religion as bad and hateful, and is baptized by him with the name of "Devil."[2] Thus it readily comes about that he conceives the whole life of the Universe as a struggle between the adorable principle he calls God and the detestable principle he calls Satan.

And yet, all the time, the truth is staring him in the face, if he would but see it, that the struggle exists nowhere but in his own fancy, and that the system of the universe is one and the same in its double aspect as friendly and

[1] It is interesting, for example, to observe how Blake is constantly passing from the assertion of one of these extremes to the other. Contrast, for instance, the sentiment of "The Garden of Love" with that of the lines "To Tirzah."

[2] The religious spirits of Hellas, on the contrary, found precisely this aspect of the world-order most worthy of wonder and reverence. For Sophocles (*Antigone*, 614) it is a law of nature that *οὐδὲν ἕρπει θνατῶν βιότῳ παμπολύ γ' ἐκτὸς ἄτας.* (The text of the passage is uncertain, but the meaning clear.)

as hostile to man and his aspirations. It is only the metaphysician, and not the mystic, who can venture to recognise this final identity of "God" and "Devil," because mysticism is, in its very essence, intensely *practical*, and without compromise on this point practice is impossible. For practice you *must* be content to recognise the antipathy and the struggle between good and evil as a final reality, whether, as in mere morality, you regard the contest as doubtful and undecided, or, as in the ethical religions, as being at every moment decided in favour of good. It is precisely because metaphysics, as such, is purely speculative and has no branch of moral practice founded upon it, that it is metaphysics, and metaphysics only, which can consistently and permanently transcend the oppositions of morality in its thinking, and place us finally "beyond good and bad."

Thus religion, like morality, is seen to be essentially a matter of compromise between views which are finally irreconcilable. And with the recognition of this fact disappears the last vestige of any claim that might be made on the part of religious doctrines and theories to convey to us final and consistent speculative knowledge. We may even go so far as to say, Every religious doctrine, just in so far as it is of practical importance, *must* be more or less speculatively false. Or, what is the same fact looked at from another side, no *mere* truth is of any real avail as a guide to moral practice. For without illusion and compromise not recognised for what it is practice is impossible.

The full perception of this truth is not without an important bearing on the understanding of the true relation between "science" and "religion." If only we will see clearly that *mere* truth is of no use as a guide in practice, and on the other hand that the guiding ideas which *are* of practical use *cannot* be altogether true, the notion of a "conflict between religion and science" will lose all meaning for us. For we shall then readily perceive that the real enemy of the life of practical "faith" is not scientific knowledge, but on the one hand the unintelligent ecclesiasticism which mistakes its own formulæ for scientific truths, and consequently insists that all religious experience shall express itself in just those forms and no others, and on the other the equally unintelligent

scientific rationalism which cannot understand that an idea may possess the highest value for practical purposes as establishing an ideal of conduct without being "verifiable" or even ultimately true.

We have now, if our analysis of the practical life is in its main outlines correct, traced the experiences which agree in containing an element of approbation or disapprobation from their simple beginning in individual anticipations and memories of a pleasant and unpleasant character up to their culmination in an attitude towards the world and human life based upon the assumed identification of our judgment of approval with a force or reality which upholds and sustains every department of the world of experience. We have found at every stage of our journey that the theoretical assumptions upon which the moral view of life is based and the concepts with which it operates prove to be in the last resort composed of contradictory factors, the amalgamation of which into a consistent theory is finally unthinkable.

As we advanced towards the final culmination of morality in practical religion we saw the notions of "guilt," "desert," "obligation," and "free will," which ordinary ethics assumes as fundamental, lose both scientific meaning and practical validity. And even the life of practical religion, we have learned, though it dispenses with so many of the uncritical assumptions of mere morality, needs as its basis the assumption for practical purposes of a standpoint which metaphysical criticism must finally reject as self-contradictory and unintelligible.

What is the conclusion to which this body of results unmistakably points? It is this, that ethics, resting, as we have seen that it does in all its stages, upon concepts which are tainted with illusion and cannot be purged from that illusion without suicidal results, cannot be founded, except in ignorance of the nature of the subject-matter, upon a doctrine of metaphysical first principles, and can still less be regarded as itself affording the sole and sufficient basis for a metaphysical theory of the ultimate character of existence. Ethics, to be successfully founded upon principles of ultimate metaphysical validity, would have to be divested of its special character as a science of human ideals—since none of our ideals can be stated in terms of an ultimately self-consistent

character. And again, a metaphysic founded upon ethics would be a metaphysic of baseless and ultimately unmeaning assumptions—in a word, a science of "make believe."

It is only when ethics is founded upon the patient examination of the concrete facts of the moral life, *i.e.* upon the data supplied by psychology, sociology, and the other sciences which have to do with empirical human nature, and when metaphysics, on the other hand, is allowed to set about the work of criticising the various theories that profess to express the results of human experience in absolute independence of any foregone conclusions, ethical or otherwise, that either study can be adequately pursued. An ethical theory which shall take into account all the phases of our moral life and attempt to group them in the order of their increasing depth and complexity,—a metaphysical theory which shall apply its standard of ultimate intelligibility without fear or favour to all our most cherished ideals,—these two can only flourish where neither is allowed to intrude into the province of the other. The consequence of a "contamination" of the two, whether by forcing our study of the facts of morality into a form dictated by *a priori* considerations of metaphysics or by compelling our metaphysics to swallow without analysis a bolus of "ethical postulates," can only be a bastard discipline which is neither unmutilated ethics nor uncorrupted metaphysics.

This is not, of course, to deny the possibility of the value of inquiries of the type which used to be called "Metaphysic of Ethics." For there will always remain the necessity that the concepts upon which men, at various stages of their moral development, act should be subjected from time to time to criticism by the science which takes as its object the discovery of the formal characteristics of pure experience, and as its standard of ultimate truth the entire absence of ultimately non-experiential and therefore contradictory elements. So long as it is still possible to put forward notions which such criticism can easily show to be ultimately unintelligible as if they were the first principles and unchallenged axioms of philosophical truth,—in other words, so long as human beings are still capable of confused thinking and unintelligent compromise, the "Metaphysic of Ethics" will have plenty of critical, though—if our argument has not been throughout

fallacious—not of constructive work to do. Only the proper place for such critical work will always be, as we can now understand, at the end, and not at the beginning of our ethical studies.

The indispensable prerequisite of serious metaphysical criticism, in ethics as in all other departments of human knowledge, is a Phenomenology—that is, a collection of leading and typical examples of a certain side of our experiences as human beings, described with the greatest fulness and accuracy attainable, and so arranged as to indicate the lines along which the more complex types of experience have, in all probability, grown up out of the simpler. Were our experience as human beings confined to the phases studied by any particular science—such, for instance, as ethics—such a Phenomenology or panoramic view of the development of intelligence in a single direction would be the sole and sufficient content of a system of experiential philosophy. But since the very fact that concrete experience presents very diverse phases or aspects, each of which has primarily to be studied in isolation from the rest, sets us upon the task of comparing the results of our different scientific inquiries, with a view to obtaining some general notion of the character of experience as a single whole, we are necessarily driven forward from the construction of a Phenomenology to criticise its contents in the light of the standard of all-comprehensiveness and complete internal coherency which we have called that of "pure" experience.

The business of such a philosophical "critique" of human experience will thus be twofold. It must, in the first place, attempt to discover the formal characteristics which belong to any and every true expression of "experience" simply in virtue of its experiential character, and, in the second place, must examine the principles, axioms, or "categories" made use of by various sciences in the description of experience, in order to determine whether any of them are "formal" characteristics of a pure or non-symbolic experience, and, if not, at what point and why "symbolic" elements enter into them. The former of these tasks, when systematically carried out, results in a general science of metaphysics; the latter would naturally take the shape of a series of metaphysical criticisms, or bodies of applied metaphysics, answering to the various main divisions

of empirical science. We should then have, if the work of the philosopher could be completely executed, not only a Metaphysics of Ethics, but Metaphysics of Nature, of Art, and of Religion—not to speak of a still more general Metaphysics of Society—which would have useful work to perform in the criticism and the castigation of the hypotheses of the unphilosophical sociologist. As ethics, according to the view of the clear-sighted philosophers of the ancient world, is ultimately a subdivision of the wider science of politics, or, as we should now say, of society, so the Metaphysics of Ethics would, in a completed system of human knowledge, rank as one section, and not the least important section, of the Metaphysics of Society.

We may conjecture that with the advance of human knowledge the special sciences will tend more and more to fall into two well organised groups, each of course provided with its subordinate collections of mere observations, a body of natural sciences, more or less closely cohering together and resting upon a common basis supplied by the concepts of the conservation and transformation of energy, and a similar group of social sciences, also internally organised and connected by a common basis of psychology. It will only be when, by the creation of some such organised science of social forms, ethics has been assigned to its proper place in a general description of the characteristic features of human life, that the work of the Metaphysic of Ethics will be capable of satisfactory execution. At present, having regard to the chaotic condition of ethical study itself, we have no sufficient warrant for supposing that the ethical ideas which are from time to time declared to rank as "ultimate postulates" of thought are "ultimate" even in the sense of being indispensable working hypotheses within the department of ethics itself, to say nothing of being anything more. In combating many current ethical superstitions the metaphysician is presumably fighting foes whom the progress of investigation into ethical facts would of itself ultimately destroy without his assistance.[1]

Thus we find ourselves led back by a circuitous route to a conclusion already expressed in an earlier chapter, that the really pressing problem for ethical students at the present day

[1] *E.g.* "Free Will," "Unconditional Obligation."

is the collection of a body of facts relative to the ethical opinions and emotions actually formed by different individuals and different classes of society. Without the material supplied by this preliminary examination of the facts ethics will be condemned in the future, as in the past, to the unprofitable task of threshing the old straw from which all the grain was long ago beaten out by Plato and Aristotle. If this necessary but tedious preliminary inquiry is seriously undertaken, it may not place ethics in a position to dictate "postulates" to the metaphysician, but it should at least enable us to construct upon a basis of psychological analysis a picture of the successive stages by which moral development advances from an almost animal beginning to its final culmination in the life of the hero and the sage. To such a constructive Phenomenology of Ethics I fear this Essay cannot claim to have made any direct contribution; I should, however, be fain to hope that our criticism of popular misconceptions has, here and there at least, pointed the way to the true understanding of the nature and the methods of moral science.

Our discussion may at times have led us, to all appearances, far away from the question of philosophical method which we proposed at the outset to answer. Yet it will, I think, be found that all that has been said in the preceding chapters arises naturally from our adherence to a single principle of philosophical criticism, explained and explicitly defended in our opening pages. If it be true, as we then contended, that the ultimate aim of all philosophical study is the description of experience, considered as a single all-embracing system, in terms which are themselves resolvable into contents of experiences of which the conditions are definitely known, then it must follow that the only way to ascertain whether the concepts of ethics are capable of being expressed in such purely experiential terms is to attempt such an analysis of ethical modes of thought as we have tried to give in the third and following chapters of this Essay. And it must also follow, that our refusal to accord to any of the categories of ethics ultimate validity or even intelligibility for metaphysics can only be met in one of two ways, either by showing that our analysis is false or by proving that the contradictions it has detected are not really contradictory.

Pending such refutation we are, I think, at least entitled to the presumption of correctness afforded by the substantial agreement between our own verdict upon "morality" as a coherent system and that which has been passed by the religious consciousness in all ages. Where religion itself, in its highest forms on one side at least an outgrowth of the ethical spirit, is found preferring the publican to the Pharisee and declaring the "righteousness which is of the law" to be no better than "filthy rags," it is not to be wondered at if philosophical criticism, which has no practical purposes of its own to carry out, and therefore can afford to consider the phenomena of morality without prejudice or favour, finds the ethical view of the world finally unsatisfactory and unintelligible.

And there is this important difference between our position and that of the man of religion. When the man of religion bids you live in a supermoral way there is always the practical danger that he will be only too literally obeyed. Antinomianism in practice numbers the basest as well as some of the noblest of mankind among its votaries. Hence, as we have seen already, religion, if it is to remain of practical use as a guide through life, is driven with strange inconsistency to recommend men not to be too religious. It is good, sometimes and in some things, to live "beyond good and bad"; it would be disastrous to live permanently in so rarefied an atmosphere. "Mutual forgiveness of each vice," for instance, is an admirable thing in private life, and so is the refusal to "judge" our friends; but you could not maintain the social fabric unimpaired unless, in your public relations at least, you treat crime as something to be requited according to its deserts, and moral shortcomings—or at least some of them—as things to be judged with impartial severity. But philosophy is damned to no such standing contradiction. As—in Aristotelian phrase—it is the foundation of no "art," it has no need to compromise with practical necessities, and, in our speculative thinking at least, we can afford to recognise moral distinctions for the superficial things they are without misgivings as to ulterior consequences. Religion has its Jacks of Leyden, but there are no Anabaptists of metaphysics.

Though, of course, it is equally true that metaphysics is as impotent for direct good as for direct harm in the sphere

of conduct. The ice-water of metaphysical speculation neither destroys nor sustains the active life, whereas the strong wine of religion, if it turns in the corrupted nature to poison, ministers strength and vigour to the frame of the fundamentally healthy. It is thus, I conceive, a pure mistake to think that metaphysics could ever furnish a substitute for practical religion. The metaphysician, being by nature a critic and analyst of experiences, may find "faith" more difficult than most men, but, if he is to act as well as to think, there must be occasions when he does well to come out of his metaphysical shell and abandon himself to the current of vigorous practical emotion. For action he too must have his "religion," even though he knows in his reflective moments that no man's religion, not even his own, is unalloyed truth. In fact, the very knowledge that no religion can be quite the truth should save the metaphysician from the temptation to treat any as mere error.

I am, of course, aware that there are many points of interest and importance raised by our general conception of the metaphysical problem to which we have in the present Essay been quite unable to do justice. It is clear that we might, for instance, be asked to say whether we regard the contents of an experience and the experiencing process itself as inseparable or not, and again, whether we recognise the existence of anything inaccessible to the human experiences with which alone human knowledge has to concern itself. It might even be suggested—though I do not myself think the suggestion fully intelligible—that the human mind, even at its best, is such an uneven reflecting surface as is spoken of by Bacon, and inevitably "distorts" the contents which it experiences. In a word, we might find ourselves called upon to deal with all the issues which are popularly regarded as summed up in the opposition of "Realism" and "Idealism." If we have on the whole avoided the discussion of these issues, it has not been so much from not having an opinion upon them as because the determination of them did not seem absolutely necessary for our purpose, which was, after all, only to gain a firm basis for a conception of the relation between metaphysics and ethics. For this purpose it is hardly necessary to ask whether the experiences which are

the material of all our knowledge are separable from the states which experience them or not. The question is one which I should not be unwilling to discuss at a more suitable opportunity, but for the present it will be sufficient to say that, as far as I can see, the *onus probandi* rests altogether upon the philosopher who maintains that experience and its contents are two—in other words, on the "realist." And I may perhaps add that I have not as yet met a "realist" argument which appeared to be free from obvious fallacies.

Indeed the only really forcible "realist" contention seems to be the favourite one that "idealism," or "Berkleyanism," or whatever other name you prefer for the opposing view, leads logically to Solipsism, an argument which loses all its weight as soon as you realise that the distinction between "myself" and others is not original, but is as much a creation of the psychological mechanism as *e.g.* the distinction between myself to-day and myself of yesterday. This again is a topic upon which it would, in another context, be profitable to enlarge; but I must here content myself with remarking that it is at least a huge assumption that what I call "my" mental states and those of others may not form together the contents of a wider consciousness, much as the psychical concomitants of excitements in different regions of "my own" brain together form "my" consciousness. I do not at this moment assert the existence of such a "universal" consciousness or "world soul." I do, however, say that the experiences of religion point in that direction, that the notion is perfectly intelligible, and that a philosopher who sets himself, as Mr. Rashdall, unless I misunderstand his drift, has done in his recent volume of sermons, to prove that such a notion is "utterly and entirely without meaning," has, to say the least of it, his work cut out for him.[1]

Tempting, however, as it is to follow up these topics and to confirm our original position by an exposure of the weak places in an enemy's armour, the task is, after all, not entirely germane to our own problem. With our verdict upon the ultimate coherency of the "religious" view of the world with itself that problem has, by implication, received its solution. The final break-down of religious ideas when treated as a fund

[1] *Doctrine and Development*, p. 7.

of true information about the nature of the real world is itself the best proof that the study of the practical life in all its stages is, and always must be, entirely independent of all preconceived metaphysical notions, and that no "postulates" can be forced by ethics or natural theology upon a reluctant metaphysic. For morality and religion the one thing needful, for metaphysics the one thing "suspect," is a vein of ardent natural emotion unchecked and unsophisticated by philosophical reflection upon the ultimate constitution of things. Ethics and religion can never afford to forget, nor metaphysics to remember, the aphorism of a great moral and religious thinker—"the tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction."

THE END

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